

**Introductory Statement by The Hon. Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zambry Abd. Kadir
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia
Forum on Women In Diplomacy : A Spectrum of Opportunities
in conjunction with
International Day of Women In Diplomacy 2023,
23 June, Hilton Kuala Lumpur**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim,

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, and good afternoon to all.

Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is an honour for me to be able to deliver this welcoming speech to you – all prominent and successful women in your own right and in your own respective fields. Today we are celebrating – a bit early – the International Day of Women in Diplomacy, adopted as resolution 269 of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly last year.
2. A year on, we are here to discuss the opportunities available for women in the field of diplomacy, what gaps exist, and how we may together address it, under the theme of Women in Diplomacy: A Spectrum of Opportunities.
3. The Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR), as one of the agencies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has taken the lead in officially celebrating women in diplomacy. Their roundtable discussion on Feminist Foreign Policy, held in November last year together with the Asia Foundation, was a frank and in-depth discussion on the benefits of applying a feminist lens to foreign policy, and drawing upon

the experience of countries that have already successfully implemented such approaches.

4. This celebration is to recognize the important contributions that have been made by women in diplomacy, be they diplomats, managers and administrators within the international diplomacy circles, or even peacekeepers.
5. Let us be reminded by one of the many greatest contributions of women in diplomacy. Eleanor Roosevelt as the first chairman of the United Nations Human Rights, has led to the drafting and signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1945 and eventually appointed as the first chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. This was a significant contribution that have a resounding impact across the globe, not just within the corridors of the United Nations.
6. Women have played pivotal roles in many other fields of the diplomatic spectrum, contributing to the development of countries and the world at large. From the first appointed woman ambassador PG Lim, to the first career ambassador Datuk Zabedah Ali, to the most junior officer in the ministry currently – each and every one of our women diplomats have been an integral part of Malaysia's foreign policy formulation and implementation.
7. Many Malaysian female diplomats were also given the opportunity to hold positions as Ambassadors, High Commissioners and become Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. I believe that Malaysia has demonstrated a strong commitment to granting women a voice and equal opportunity to contribute to the nation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

8. Our national policy based on Malaysia Madani is the best pillar in displaying our commitment to ensure that space and opportunities are given equally to both men and women in the diplomacy and national governance. Madani refers to six pillars namely sustainability, care and compassion, respect, innovation, prosperity and trust. In the world's history, a civilisation is created as a consequence of the collaboration of all humans, whether they be men or women.

9. I applaud the efforts of the organisers in providing such a meaningful way to mark the International Day of Women in Diplomacy. With that, I would like to express my profound appreciation to the panelists and participants of this Forum. Your opinions are extremely important to ensure that women in diplomacy are recognised as the change-makers.

To our wonderful women in diplomacy - thank you, terima kasih.

Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah

Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh