



**MEDIA STATEMENT
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)**

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**SUHAKAM REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY AND
WOMEN'S RIGHTS ON IWD 2026**

KUALA LUMPUR (8 MARCH 2026) - In conjunction with International Women's Day observed this year under the theme "Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls.", the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) reaffirms its unwavering commitment to advancing and safeguarding gender equality and women's rights, in line with international human rights standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

This year's theme serves as a timely reminder that human rights must be realised in the everyday lives of all women and girls. These include the right to equality before the law and access to justice; the freedom to express themselves and access information; the right to safety in both digital and public spaces; and the ability to participate fully in cultural, scientific and civic life. When these rights are denied or constrained by gendered power dynamics, structural inequalities are reinforced and public trust in institutions is undermined.

SUHAKAM's external priorities are aligned with the CEDAW Concluding Observations on Malaysia, particularly the four thematic areas identified for Malaysia's Follow-up Report to CEDAW Concluding Observations due in June, namely:

- i. The enactment of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation against women, including measures to strengthen women's political leadership and to uphold the rights of women in detention.
- ii. The eradication of child marriage.
- iii. The issue of female genital mutilation (FGM); and
- iv. The protection of the human rights of refugee women and girls.

These priority areas reflect persistent gaps in law, policy and implementation that require urgent and coordinated national action. SUHAKAM will continue to monitor progress, engage relevant stakeholders and advocate for reforms consistent with Malaysia's obligations under CEDAW, ensuring that commitments translate into tangible protection and equality for all women and girls.

Guided by the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APF) Gender Strategy that informs the work of national human rights institutions, and pursuant to its broader human rights mandate, SUHAKAM remains committed to addressing gender inequality in substance, structures and culture. This includes monitoring systems affecting women's access to justice, safeguarding freedom of expression, supporting gender-responsive laws and policies, and confronting discrimination and gender-based violence in all its forms. These efforts reflect SUHAKAM's determination to mainstream gender equality both internally and externally, fully integrated across all human rights principles.



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Through its proposed parliamentary engagement under the APF Gender Strategy follow-up, SUHAKAM underscores International Women's Day as a critical opportunity to move from commitment to action. SUHAKAM urges all duty bearers, especially government institutions, Parliament and key stakeholders, to work collectively to ensure that human rights are effectively protected and enforced and translated into concrete justice and meaningful outcomes for women and girls throughout Malaysia.

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**Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
8 March 2026**