



PRESS RELEASE
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY

APEC WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY FORUM
WEDNESDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. The APEC Women and the Economy Forum (WEF) convened on Wednesday, 7 September 2022 in a hybrid format, with some participants present physically in Bangkok. The Forum was chaired by His Excellency Chuti Krairiksh, Minister of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand. Brunei Darussalam was represented by Yang Mulia Awang Mohammad Harris bin Brigadier General (B) Dato Paduka Haji Ibrahim, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Trade and Industry) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy. Also present were Ministers and Senior Officials from other APEC Economies.
2. Under the theme "*Ensuring Women's Economic Empowerment*", discussions at the Forum focused on how women's economic empowerment can contribute to the implementation of APEC's Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through its Aotearoa Plan of Action and the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth (2019 – 2030). The Forum also exchanged views on how women can play a greater role in supporting more inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic development and well-being and also, build resilience against future shocks. Economies generally expressed commitment to tackle gender inequality and promote greater access to STEM education, among others.
3. In his opening remarks, His Excellency Chuti Krairiksh reiterated that women's economic empowerment can help achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability. He also stated that gender perspective must be mainstreamed into policies and highlighted the importance of collaboration and networking to strengthen the work on promoting women's

economic empowerment. A keynote address was also delivered by Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, former Prime Minister of Thailand, in which he underscored the importance for pandemic recovery efforts to be inclusive and sustainable that enables women's economic empowerment. He emphasised the importance for APEC Economies to continue working together and adopt policies that support women's economic empowerment as well as look at new growth areas such as the Bio-Circular Green (BCG) Economy and enhancing digital skills.

4. Yang Mulia Awang Mohammad Harris delivered a statement which, inter alia, recognised that women play a role in addressing climate change, including through the BCG Economy model. He also appreciated the need to promote gender responsive policies towards fostering women-led MSMEs and reaffirmed Brunei Darussalam's position on continuing to advocate equal opportunities for women's education and employment as well as carrying out more domestic initiatives to inspire and empower women entrepreneurship. In briefly touching upon Brunei Darussalam's goals under its Digital Economy Masterplan 2025, he expressed Brunei Darussalam's advocacy for enhanced digital literacy and integration through a whole of community approach.
5. The Forum was also briefed by Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Rebecca Sta Maria, Executive Director of the APEC Secretariat, on APEC's work to support women's economic empowerment in the region. This was followed by updates from Yang Mulia Dayang Hafimi Abdul Haadii, Co-Chair of ABAC Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) and Inclusiveness Working Group and ABAC Brunei Member, on ABAC's 2022 work programme and ABAC's recommendations which included the call for APEC Economies to develop legal and regulatory infrastructure, put in place policies and agreements to simplify cross-border e-commerce for women-owned businesses and accelerate efforts towards attaining a regional digital trade/e-commerce agreement to harmonise rules across all APEC markets that will ease of doing business across the APEC region.
6. At the end of the Meeting, Thailand issued the Women Economic Forum: High-Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy Statement of the Chair.
