



PRESS RELEASE
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY

**ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC)
HIGH POLICY DIALOGUE ON WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY FORUM
TUESDAY, 12 AUGUST 2025**

1. The APEC High Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy (HLPD-WE) convened on Tuesday, 12 August 2025 in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The Dialogue was chaired by H.E. Young-sook Shin, Acting Minister of Gender Equality and Family of Republic of Korea. Brunei Darussalam was represented by Yang Mulia Dr. Hajah May Fa'ezah binti Haji Ahmad Ariffin, Permanent Secretary (Economy, Trade and Industry) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy. Ministers and senior officials from other APEC Economies, and Executive Director of APEC Secretariat were also in attendance.
2. Under the theme "Promoting Women's Economic Participation for Sustainable Growth", the Dialogue explored policy approaches to strengthen women's roles in the economy, aligned with APEC's Putrajaya Vision 2040, the La Serena Roadmap, and the Aotearoa Plan of Action. Discussions highlighted how demographic shifts, digital transformation, and the green transition present both opportunities and challenges for women's economic empowerment. APEC Economies exchanged experiences on supporting women-led MSMEs, advancing digital inclusion, and improving care infrastructure, while reaffirming their commitment to tackling gender inequality and remove structural barriers.

3. During the HLDP-WE, Yang Mulia Dr. Hajah May Fa'ezah delivered a statement to reaffirm Brunei Darussalam's strong commitment in advancing women's economic empowerment as one of the central pillars to achieve *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, a move which is also in alignment with the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and Aotearoa Plan of Action. In pursuit of such agenda, she shared Brunei Darussalam is exploring multi-faceted policy measures to increase women's economic participation. A key focus remains on creating a supportive ecosystem for women through programmes offering targeted financial assistance, capacity-building opportunities, and mentorship for women entrepreneurs—in addition to inclusive policy approaches. These initiatives such as the Industry Business Academy¹, and Brunei Mentors for Entrepreneurs Network² are also complemented by regional initiatives, like ASEAN Women's Entrepreneurs Network, which foster recognition and cross-border linkages. Through the Industry Business Academy, an estimated 10,300 women have been trained since 2016 and at least 57% of the businesses engaged are women-owned.
4. The Dialogue was preceded by a private-public sector session where panel discussions focused on efforts to strengthen care systems and promote work-life balance following the demographic shifts, as well as to facilitate women's economic participation in response to the advancement of digital technologies and AI.
5. At the end of the HLPD-WE, APEC Economies adopted the Women and the Economy Joint Statement which is accessible via the APEC website at: <https://www.apec.org>

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¹ 57% of over 10,000 trainees were women-led businesses
² facilitated over 360 mentorship engagements