

### Women and Education

Education had always been the thrust of NCWO's concern from the 1960s. The NCWO conducted seminars and workshops over the years where resolutions and recommendations in the form of memoranda were submitted to the government and the Ministry of Education. Some of the issues focused on were automatic promotion, Bahasa Malaysia classes, improvement of the teaching of English as a second language, size of classes, double-session schools, school dropouts, teachers' workload, upgrading of teacher training and many other related issues, to ensure that our children have a good learning environment. In this context, it is appropriate to quote the then NCWO Vice President, Professor Emeritus Puan Sri Dato' Dr Fatimah Hamid Don who said, "In fact education tends to serve the system rather than the individuals."

### Women and Health

The NCWO acknowledges the fact that Malaysian healthcare system is considered one of the success stories in the country. The health service in both rural and urban areas is widely praised. One of the concerns of NCWO is the need for gender disaggregated data in order to understand how diseases affect men and women. The NCWO through the government budget dialogue sessions also expressed concern for the privatisation of the health sector and the rising costs of healthcare which poses problems to the poor. In 1975 NCWO called for the setting up of a women's hospital to deal with research and treatment of various diseases affecting women.

Another committee set up in 1967 was the Health Committee, again after the NCWO's affiliation with the International Committee on Women (ICW). The Committee on Health was effective in bringing to the government's attention several important concerns, especially issues of AIDS and drug addiction. The latter began in 1977 with the Conference on Drug Abuse, the outcome of which was the realisation that here was an issue that required a concerted effort from all sectors of the government.



*Berdiri untuk lagu Hari Wanita yang dinyanyikan pada Hari Wanita pada tahun 1972. Di barisan hadapan ialah ketua-ketua wanita termasuk Toh Puan Rahah (Tun, ketiga dari kiri), Datin Fatimah Hashim (Tun, ketiga dari kanan), Tengku Puan Sri Azizah Mohamed, (pertama dari kanan) dan Puan F.R. Bhupalan (Datuk, pertama dari kiri)*  
*Standing up for the Hari Wanita song being sung on Women's Day in 1972. In the front row are women leaders including Toh Puan Rahah (Tun, third from left), Datin Fatimah Hashim (Tun, third from right), Tengku Puan Sri Azizah Mohamed, (first from right) and Mrs F.R. Bhupalan (Datuk, first from left)*



*Professor Emeritus Fatimah Hamid Don (Puan Sri Dato') di mesyuarat UNESCO di New Delhi, India pada tahun 1965*  
*Professor Emeritus Fatimah Hamid Don (Puan Sri Dato') at a UNESCO meeting in New Delhi, India in 1965*

# Had umur kahwin: Badan2 wanita alu2 langkah



TAN SRI FATIMAH

**KUALA LUMPUR, Isnin.** — Pergerakan-pertubuhan wanita hari ini menyokong langkah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Al-Azhar Utama Islam Malaysia menjangka umur bagi lelaki dan dara yang hendak berkahwin.

Yang Dipertua Majlis Kebangsaan Pertubuhan-pertubuhan Wanita Malaysia, Tan Sri Fatimah Hashim berkata, "Kami, kaum wanita memang telah lama memperjuangkan supaya umur bagi seseorang yang hendak berkahwin dihadkan kerana banyak perceraian berlaku."

Katanya: "Perjuangan kami mengenai undang-undang nikah cerai bukannya hendak menentang syarat-syarat yang ditetapkan dalam Islam tetapi sesuatu langkah yang di buat hendaklah sesuai dengan hukum Syara'."

### Lebih dari satu

"Kami wanita ingin melihat perceraian tidak berlaku walaupun hukum Syara' Islam mengahurkan kaum lelaki beristeri lebih dari satu," katanya lagi. Yang Dipertua Persekutuan Wanita Malaysia, Puan Azah Aziz juga menyokong langkah menjangka umur ber-

kahwin. Katanya, "Lamakah tersebut patut diadakan dulu lagi kerana banyak gadis berkahwin semasa muda yang begitu ramai." "Gebayahan mereka belum tahu tanggungjawab rumah-tangga dan perkara seperti ini merupakan kesuntutan rumah-tangga."

### Masalah besar

Sementara itu, Setiausaha Agung Angkatan Bella Islam (AIBIM) yang juga Presiden Majlis Setia Malaysia, Encik Anwar Ibrahim menyatakan soal menjangka umur bagi mereka yang hendak berkahwin bukanlah masalah besar kerana tanya soal moral masyarakat.

Katanya: "Kita janganlah mengambil berat tentang perkahwinan tetapi mestilah juga membincangkan mengenai kesuntutan ahlikh bella-bella Islam."

"Apa yang penting dalam perkahwinan ialah persefahaman tentang tanggungjawab kotamarga mengikut ajaran Islam." Encik Anwar menyatakan setiap cadangan mengenai perubahan dalam nikah cerai Islam mestilah sesuai dengan ajaran agama Islam.

Pada hari AIDS Sedunia dalam tahun 1990, Jawatankuasa ini memfokuskan perhatiannya kepada kesan HIV/AIDS terhadap wanita. Ia menyeru kerajaan untuk mendidik masyarakat mengenai isu ini menerusi suatu program yang sistematik yang dapat mencegah merebaknya penyakit ini secara berleluasa. Pendidikan yang terancang dan meluas, menjadi teras utama strategi menentang AIDS yang dicadangkan kepada kerajaan oleh NCWO. Ekoran daripada itu, ia menganjurkan bengkel kebangsaan, "Kesedaran AIDS Di Kalangan Wanita", pada Julai 1991 dengan bantuan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia. Ini membawa kepada penubuhan Majlis AIDS Malaysia (MAC) pada Mei 1993. Pada Mei 1993, Malam Mengenang AIDS Antarabangsa diadakan di Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur.

NCWO juga memperjuangkan isu-isu kesihatan awam lain seperti kesihatan kanak-kanak, penjagaan kesihatan luar bandar dan bandar, kadar kematian dan penyakit, pusat rawatan pakar dan penswastaaan perkhidmatan kesihatan. Pendirian NCWO berhubung isu penswastaaan ialah bahawa kesihatan bukan satu komoditi yang boleh dijual beli, tetapi ia adalah hak asasi manusia.

### Hak Wanita

Beberapa isu hak membentuk teras perjuangan NCWO untuk wanita. Berteraskan keprihatinannya untuk memartabatkan institusi keluarga dengan perhubungan yang berasaskan kesaksamaan dan kepercayaan, NCWO berjuang untuk menambahbaik undang-undang perkahwinan bagi bukan Islam. Ini mencetuskan penubuhan Suruhanjaya Diraja bagi Perkahwinan dan Perceraian bagi Bukan Islam pada Februari 1970. Bagi pihak Majlis, sebuah jawatankuasa kecil disusun bagi meneliti undang-undang berkaitan agar satu memorandum dapat dikemukakan kepada Suruhanjaya Diraja ini. Memorandum ini menegaskan pendiriannya mengenai monogami.

Satu lagi isu penting bagi NCWO ialah kesengsaraan isteri dan anak-anak yang ditinggalkan oleh suami mereka tanpa membayar nafkah. Dengan mengisytiharkannya sebagai satu hak, NCWO meyakinkan kerajaan untuk memastikan hak ini tidak diragut daripada wanita dan kanak-kanak. Ia juga memperjuangkan isu diskriminasi gender dalam undang-undang hak penjagaan yang menetapkan bahawa seorang ayah sebagai penjaga tunggal bagi seorang anak. NCWO mencadangkan satu pindaan kepada Akta Hak Penjagaan Bayi 1961. Ia memperjuangkan hak penjagaan bersama bagi membolehkan anak yang dipelihara oleh salah seorang daripada ibu bapa yang bermasalah, boleh mendapat perlindungan daripada yang seorang lagi.

# Wanita seru undang2 baru nikah-cerai dilaksanakan dengan segera

KUALA LUMPUR, Khamis



**WANITA-WANITA** di sini menyokong langkah Kerajaan memperketat lagi undang-undang nikah cerai orang Islam.

Mereka menjangkanya sebagai kena pada tempatnya dan patut dilaksanakan seberapa cepat.

Presiden Majlis Kebangsaan Pertubuhan Wanita, Tan Sri Fatimah Haji Hashim, berkata beliau menyokong penuh langkah itu.

Bellau menyatakan, tuntutan wanita dalam hak nikah cerai itu telah lama dibuat oleh Persekutuan Wanita UMNO, ketika beliau masih menjadi Yang Dipertuanya dan Menteri Kabinet Am Dahl.

"Memang sudah kena pada tempat dan masanya Kerajaan memberi"

On World AIDS Day in 1990, the Committee focused its attention on the effect of HIV/AIDS on women. It called on the government to educate the public on the issue through a systematic programme that would prevent the rapid spread of the disease. Education, well-coordinated with a long reach then, was the thrust of the strategy against AIDS proposed to the government by the NCWO. Following this, it organised a national workshop, "AIDS Awareness for Women", in July 1991 assisted by the World Health Organisation. This led to the formation of the Malaysian Aids Council (MAC). In May 1993, the International AIDS Memorial Night was held at the Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur.

The NCWO also pursued other general health matters such as children's health, rural and urban health, mortality rates and diseases, centres for specialised treatment and the privatisation of healthcare. The NCWO's stand on the latter is that health is not a commodity to be bought and sold, but rather a human right.

### Women's Rights

Several rights issues formed part of the NCWO's struggle for women. Revolving around its concern to maintain the integrity of the family with a relationship of equality and trust, the NCWO fought vigorously to reform the marriage laws for non-Muslims. This resulted in the setting up of the Royal Commission for Marriage and Divorce for non-Muslims in February 1970. On the part of the Council, a sub-committee was organised to scrutinise the relevant laws so that a memorandum can be submitted to the Royal Commission. The memorandum made a strong case for monogamy.

Another matter of great concern to the NCWO was the plight of wives and children of errant men who shirked paying maintenance. Declaring this to be a right, it convinced the government to ensure that this right was not robbed from the women and children. It also took up the matter of gender discrimination in the guardianship law which made the father the sole guardian of a child. It proposed an amendment to the Guardianship of Infants Act 1961. The NCWO advocated for shared guardianship so that a child with one difficult parent can have the protection of the other.



*Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali (Tun)*



*Isteri Perdana Menteri Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali (Tun) di pelancaran kempen kesedaran AIDS  
The Prime Minister's wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali (Tun) at the launch of the AIDS awareness campaign*

# CHANGES SOUGHT IN RAPE LAWS

● The present law of evidence has invariably resulted in the rape victim being put on trial and her character and reputation being torn to shreds ●

— DPP Gooi Soon Seng.

By MUHARYANI OTHMAN

As it is now clear that stiffer sentences on convicted rapists have not proved deterrent, there is a clamour from all quarters — women's organisations, political bodies and the public — to review the existing laws.

The latest call was made at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's seminar on Law and Society recently, which discussed why changes should

be made, ironically from the very process which she had turned in for redress.

It says that whilst one appreciates the dangers of an innocent man falling victim to false charges of rape, it has to be borne in mind that such false charges can equally be made of any other offences under the Penal Code or other criminal statutes. Yet the requirement under section 159 (d) has not been es-



□ A group of people demonstrating against rape in Jalan Ipoh in May following the murder-rum-rape of nine-year-old schoolgirl Ang May Hong.

## Women against rape, domestic violence

By MUHARYANI OTHMAN

IT is almost three years since the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) submitted a memorandum to the Government calling for reforms to the rape laws and for the enactment of a Domestic Violence Act. Nothing has been done so far.

Hence, the present Joint Action Group is stepping up its campaign against rape and domestic violence to create greater public awareness and ensure support for the reforms.

The JAG comprises All Women's Action Society, Association of Women Lawyers, Women's Aid Organisation, Shelter — Home for the Homeless, Universiti Hospital's Intervention of Sexual Assault and Molestation (Isam) unit and concerned individuals.

From this Saturday to next Wednesday, the JAG is holding a public exhibition on rape and domestic violence with the theme Redar-



Ms Iry Josiah, one of the campaign co-ordinators.

and children throughout the country.

"They can write to the newspapers, talk to their Members of Parliament and ask for their support, and also talk to their friends and colleagues."

morandum to the Ministry of Justice. Among other amendments to the provisions in the Evidence Act that the past sexual history of the woman in a rape case other than that with the accused will be made inadmissible as evidence of "generally immoral character".

It seeks for the age of statutory rape be increased from 14 to 16, rape trials held in camera, a minimum penalty of five years and five strokes of the cane be imposed for rape cases and the definition of rape include penetration of anus and also the penetration of objects into the vagina without consent.

The NCWO's memorandum's proposal to enact Domestic Violence Act that at present there is such Act or laws that help protect better spouses and children.

The proposed Act will empower the courts to issue protection order which



Naiib Yang di Pertua (zon Utara) Datin Elizabeth Devraj menyampaikan ceramah celik undang-undang dalam kempen Akta Keganasan Rumah Tangga in Pulau Pinang  
Vice president (North Zone) Datin Elizabeth Devraj addressing a legal literacy campaign on the Domestic Violence Act in Penang

Aspek kewarganegara juga diperjuangkan oleh NCWO kerana seorang wanita asing yang mengahwini lelaki Malaysia boleh menjadi warga negara suaminya, tetapi tidak bagi lelaki asing yang mengahwini wanita tempatan. Dia terpaksa kembali ke negara asalnya, menyebabkan wanita Malaysia yang mengahwininya berpindah negara.

Masalah yang dihadapi wanita Islam adalah satu lagi isu, yang walaupun sensitif, tetapi tidak boleh diketepikan. Dengan kerjasama Hal Ehwal Wanita (HAWA), NCWO mendesak diwujudkan Mahkamah Keluarga Islam dan pembaharuan undang-undang perkahwinan Islam. Hanya selepas usaha bersepadu selama beberapa tahun, barulah Akta Undang-Undang Keluarga Islam (Wilayah Persekutuan) diperbadankan dan meliputi isu-isu poligami, perceraian, nafkah dan pembahagian harta selepas perceraian.

Dalam usaha memertabatkan hak wanita, NCWO berharap untuk mengekalkan kemurnian institusi keluarga supaya negara boleh terus berkembang maju dan rakyatnya teguh.

**Keganasan Terhadap Wanita: Rogol dan Keganasan Rumahtangga**  
Penderaan, layanan kejam dan menghina yang ditanggung oleh sesetengah wanita bukan sahaja dianggap sebagai pelanggaran hak asasi tetapi sebagai isu yang tergolong dalam ruang lingkup peribadi serta tidak layak dijadikan polisi dan tanggungjawab kerajaan. Menyedari akan keadaan ini, NCWO dan perkumpulan wanita lain berasa terpenggil untuk menarik perhatian umum. NCWO, sebagai persediaan ke arah Persidangan Wanita Sedunia Ketiga Bangsa Bersatu yang akan diadakan di Nairobi pada Julai 1985, menganjurkan bengkel dua hari untuk mengenal pasti undang-undang yang mendiskriminasi terhadap wanita. Sejumlah 45 organisasi wanita menyertai bengkel ini yang mengenal pasti lapan perundangan yang memerlukan pembaharuan. Paling utama ialah rogol dan perlunya Akta Keganasan Rumah Tangga (DVA).

Satu memorandum dirangka bagi mengemukakan ruang lopong di dalam undang-undang, termasuklah mengadakan draf Akta Keganasan Rumah Tangga. Memorandum ini dikemukakan kepada kerajaan pada 1985. Harus disebut bahawa NCWO memainkan peranan yang sangat strategik dalam meningkatkan kesedaran mengenai rogol dan kempen tegarnya selama empat tahun akhirnya mendapat sokongan Majlis Peguam. Pada 1989, rangsangan yang diwujudkan oleh pembaharuan yang dilaksanakan pada 80-an dan 90-an yang mana NCWO berperanan penting, menyaksikan perubahan-perubahan berkaitan jenayah rogol, diluluskan di Parlimen.

Citizenship was also championed by the NCWO because a woman married to a Malaysian male can acquire the nationality of her husband, but not so the foreign husband. He will be forced to return to his country, which ends up with the Malaysian wife having to follow her husband.

The plight of Muslim women was another matter that, though sensitive, cannot be ignored. Working with HAWA, the NCWO pressed for the formation of a Family Court for Muslims and a reform of marriage laws for Muslims. It was after years of concerted effort that the Islamic Family Law (Federal Territory) Act 1984 was legislated for and covered issues on polygamy, divorce, maintenance and division of assets upon divorce.

In seeking to uphold the rights of women, the NCWO hoped to keep the family institution intact so that the country can be progressive and the nation strong.

#### **Violence against Women: Rape and Domestic Violence**

Abuse, cruel and degrading treatment suffered by women were not only perceived as violations of human rights but as issues belonging to the private sphere and not worthy of state policy and obligation. Having cognizance of this, NCWO and other women's groups felt compelled to draw public attention to this. NCWO, as preparation for the UN Third World Conference on Women to be held in Nairobi in July 1985, organised a two-day workshop to identify laws that discriminate against women. A total of 45 women's organisations participated in the workshop which identified eight pieces of legislation needing reform. Uppermost were rape and the need for a Domestic Violence Act (DVA).

A memorandum was drafted highlighting the gaps in the law, including a draft law on Domestic Violence Act. The Memorandum was presented to the government in 1985. It must be said that NCWO played a very strategic role in promoting awareness on rape and its four-year intense campaign was finally supported by the Bar Council. In 1989, the impetus provided by reforms in the 80s and 90s in which NCWO played a pivotal role saw changes adopted in Parliament with regard to rape. Since these reforms the women's groups in Malaysia have carried on the campaign to monitor the implementation of the laws pertaining to violence against women holding the government and all its agencies accountable.

## MENGINSTITUSIKAN KESAKSAMAAN GENDER

Secara strateginya, tidak sukar untuk mengesan paradigma NCWO dalam perjuangan pergerakan wanita: ia menegaskan pendiriannya dalam setiap bidang dan setiap peringkat pembikinan keputusan yang memberi kesan negatif kepada wanita, secara kerjasama dengan pelbagai pihak. Pada satu peringkat, ia bertindak sebagai jambatan di antara NGO wanita dan kerajaan. Pada peringkat yang lain pula, ia menyalurkan maklumat dan data yang diperlukan oleh pembuat keputusan menerusi pembabitin peringkat tertinggi menerusi perwakilan dalam jawatankuasa-jawatankuasa yang akan menentukan bagaimana wanita boleh menjadi sebahagian penting dalam arus perdana Malaysia.

Menerusi pendekatan serampang dua mata ini, NCWO, di peringkat yang lebih luas, merundingkan penubuhan institusi-institusi wanita: Biro Wanita, jabatan kerajaan yang khusus mengenai hal-ehwal wanita; majlis perundingan kebangsaan yang bertujuan memandu polisi kerajaan berhubung pembabitin wanita dalam pembangunan; dan sebuah kementerian khusus untuk memperdanakan aliran wanita ke dalam pembangunan negara serta menjamin kebajikan mereka terpelihara.

### Majlis Penasihat Wanita – NACIWID

Idea yang mula dicetuskan pada 1966 ini menjadi realiti 10 tahun kemudian, setahun selepas sambutan Tahun Wanita Antarabangsa PBB. Dinamakan Majlis Penasihat Kebangsaan mengenai Integrasi Wanita Dalam Pembangunan (NACIWID), ia bertanggungjawab secara langsung kepada Perdana Menteri. Pada awalnya ia dirancang untuk menjadi sumber informasi mengenai wanita yang akan memaklumkan mengenai semua polisi awam. Ia mengambil masa yang lama sebelum Majlis ini mempunyai struktur sokongan yang rasmi bagi membolehkannya berfungsi secara berkesan.

NACIWID dianggotai perwakilan dari semua kementerian dan organisasi yang prihatin terhadap peluang pekerjaan untuk wanita serta semua persoalan berhubung status wanita. Ia berperanan memberi nasihat dan membuat syor-syor konkrit kepada kerajaan berhubung semua perkara yang memberi kesan terhadap wanita. Selain menjadi badan penyelarasan dan penasihat mengenai penyertaan wanita dalam pembangunan, ia juga bertindak sebagai pelindung kepada proses integrasi wanita dalam pembangunan. Dalam hal ini, pertamanya ia berusaha untuk memaksimumkan penyertaan wanita dalam pembangunan, dan kedua, membangunkan kesedaran mengenai potensi wanita sebagai suatu sumber dalam pembangunan dan perkembangannya.



*Mesuarat Majlis Penasihat Kebangsaan Mengenai Integrasi Wanita Dalam Pembangunan (NACIWID) pertama pada 1976  
The first meeting of the National Advisory Council for the Integration of Women in Development (NACIWID) in 1976*





*Dato' Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, Menteri Perpaduan Negara dan Pembangunan Masyarakat berjumpa dengan Datin Fatimah Hashim (Tun). Bersama mereka adalah ahli-ahli NCWO termasuk Puan Ramani Gurusamy (Dato') dan disebelah kanannya Datin Fauziah Ramly*  
*Dato' Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, Minister of National Unity and Community Development meets Datin Fatimah Hashim (Tun). With them are NCWO members including Mrs Ramani Gurusamy (Dato') and Datin Fauziah Ramly*

## INSTITUTIONALISING GENDER EQUALITY

Strategically it is possible to discern a kind of NCWO paradigm for feminist activism: it would have its say in every area and level of decision-making that affects women adversely through cooperation. At one level it acts as a conduit between women's NGOs and the government. At another level it feeds the information and data needs of decision-makers through its highest level participation with representatives sitting on committees that would determine how women is to be made an essential part of mainstream Malaysia.

In a two-pronged approach, the NCWO, at a more macro level, negotiated for the formation of feminist institutions: a Women's Bureau, a government department dedicated to women's affairs; a national advisory council intended to guide government policies vis-a-vis women in development; and, a ministry dedicated to mainstreaming women into the development of the country and to guarantee their welfare.

### The Women's Advisory Council – NACIWID

First broached in 1966 it became a reality 10 years later, a year after the UN International Women's Year. Named the National Advisory Council on the Integration of Women in Development (NACIWID) it was made directly responsible to the Prime Minister himself. It was to be the font of information on women that will inform all public policies. It was not until much later that the Council had a formal support structure that would give it greater effectiveness.

NACIWID comprised representatives of all Ministries and organisations concerned with the employment of women as well as questions affecting the status of women. It was to advice and make concrete recommendations to the Government on all matters which had a bearing on women. On the one hand, it is a coordinating and advisory body on the participation of women in development. On the other, it acts as a custodian of women's integration in development. In this respect, firstly, it is to strive to maximise participation of women in development and, secondly, to develop the awareness of women's potential as a resource in development and its utilisation.



Di majlis yang dianjurkan oleh NCWO untuk Menteri Perpaduan Negara dan Pembangunan Masyarakat yang baru, Dato' Napsiah Omar (Tan Sri) pada tahun 1990  
 At a reception organised by NCWO for the new Minister of National Unity and Community Development, Dato' Napsiah Omar (Tan Sri) in 1990



Tan Sri Zaleha Ismail (kanan) yang juga Yang Di Pertua NCWO sedang berbual dengan ketua-ketua tertinggi wanita, Tan Sri Siti Norma Yaacob (mantan hakim Mahkamah Persekutuan, kedua dari kiri), Dato' Mohayani Shamsudin (ahli korporat, ketiga dari kiri) dan Dato' Prof Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin (Naib Canselor UKM, kiri)  
 Tan Sri Zaleha ismail (right) who is also NCWO President chats with top women leaders Tan Sri Siti Norma Yaacob (former Federal Court judge, second from left), Dato' Mohayani Shamsudin (corporate leader, third from left) and Dato' Prof. Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahbuddin (Vice-Chancellor UKM, extreme left)

### **Biro Wanita**

Satu entiti yang penting kepada perjuangan wanita dalam jentera kerajaan ialah Biro Wanita. Walaupun idea penubuhannya dikemukakan lebih awal daripada Majlis Penasihat, iaitu pada 1964, ia hanya menjadi kenyataan pada 1993 apabila Sekretariat Hal-Ehwal Wanita, HAWA, diwujudkan. HAWA diletakkan di bawah Bahagian Pentadbiran dan Kewangan di Jabatan Perdana Menteri dan ketika itu diterajui Timbalan Menteri, Dato' Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

Ia bekerjasama erat dengan NCWO untuk memenuhi tanggungjawabnya bagi mencapai dua matlamat. Pertama, menggalakkan penyertaan wanita dalam proses pembangunan dan, kedua, memastikan wanita diintegrasikan ke dalam pelan pembangunan nasional menerusi penyediaan peluang-peluang sama rata dan kemudahan yang mencukupi. Ia juga bertindak sebagai Sekretariat untuk NACIWID serta rangkaian bironya yang meliputi semua aspek kehidupan, antaranya Keluarga dan Kesihatan, Media, Politik dan Undang-Undang.

### **Dasar Kebangsaan Mengenai Wanita**

Pada Disember 1989, kerajaan menerimapakai cadangan Dasar Kebangsaan Mengenai Wanita. Ia dikemukakan bersama Memorandum NCWO mengenai Dasar Kebangsaan Mengenai Wanita, yang mana beberapa perkara penting yang dibangkitkan turut dimasukkan ke dalam polisi berkenaan. Antara yang utama ialah seruan NCWO supaya HAWA dinaiktaraf menjadi sebuah kementerian. Tidak kurang pentingnya juga ialah ruang lingkup aspek-aspek yang digariskan dalam memorandum itu mencerminkan skop tugas ahli-ahli gabungannya. Dokumen itu meliputi jentera nasional; kesihatan; pendidikan dan latihan; perundangan; ekonomi dan pekerjaan; politik dan kepemimpinan; media; agama; kebudayaan; keganasan terhadap wanita; dan perpaduan nasional. Kesemuanya, kecuali dua yang terakhir; telah terkandung di dalam dokumen NACIWID. Ini adalah petunjuk yang jelas mengenai betapa relevannya tugas NCWO terhadap kemajuan wanita Malaysia.

### **The Women's Bureau**

Of immense importance to the women's cause is the Women's Bureau within the government machinery. Though the idea was put forward earlier than the advisory council, in 1964 to be exact, it was not achieved until 1983 with the setting up of HAWA, the Secretariat for Women's Affairs. HAWA was placed under the Administrative and Finance Division of the Prime Minister's Department and was headed by Deputy Minister Dato' Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

It worked closely with NCWO to meet its obligations in the shape of a two-fold objective. Firstly, it is to promote the participation of women in the development process and, secondly, to ensure that women are integrated into the national development plans through the provision of equal opportunities and adequate facilities. It acted, too, as the Secretariat for NACIWID and its extensive bureaux covered all aspects of life such as Family and Health, Media, Politics and Law to name but some.

### **National Policy on Women**

In December 1989, the government adopted a proposed National Policy on Women. To it, was appended the NCWO's memorandum on the National Policy on Women, some salient points of which were included in the Policy itself. The most prominent was the NCWO call for HAWA to be upgraded to ministerial level. No less important is the breadth of areas covered by the memorandum reflecting the scope of work of its affiliates. The document covered national machinery; health; education and training; the law; economy and employment; politics and leadership; media; religion; culture; violence against women; and national unity. All, bar the last two, were contained in the NACIWID document. This is a clear indication of the relevance of NCWO's work to the advancement of Malaysian women.



*Menenteri Wanita dan Pembangunan Keluarga Dato' Sri Shahrizat Jalil berdiri bergambar dengan ketua NCWO. Dari kiri, Dato' Prof. Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabuddin (Tan Sri), Puan Faridah Khalid (Dato'), Puan Ramani Gurusamy (Dato') dan Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail (Tan Sri)*  
*Minister of Women and Family Development Dato' Sri Shahrizat Jalil poses with NCWO leaders. From left: Dato' Prof. Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabuddin (Tan Sri), Puan Faridah Khalid (Dato'), Mrs Ramani Gurusamy (Dato') and Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail (Tan Sri)*



*Menenteri Wanita dan Pembangunan Keluarga, Dato' Sri Shahrizat Jalil menemui peserta-peserta wanita. Puan Rasamami Kandiah berpakaian hitam*  
*Minister of Women and Family Development Dato' Sri Shahrizat Jalil meets with women participants. Ms Rasamami Kandiah is in black*

### **Kementerian Wanita**

Mahkota idaman bagi pergerakan wanita peringkat kebangsaan sudah pastinya adalah penubuhan sebuah kementerian yang khusus menjaga hal-ehwal wanita. NCWO menekankan perlunya ada sebuah Kementerian Wanita yang bekerjasama erat dengan kementerian-kementerian lain untuk menerapkan perspektif wanita ke dalam setiap isu, agar semua polisi awam mengambil kira kepentingan wanita. Pada 2001, di bawah kepemimpinan Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, impian ini akhirnya terlaksana apabila Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita dan Keluarga ditubuhkan dengan Dato' Sri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil menjadi menterinya yang pertama.

Hari ini, 50 tahun telah berlalu, NCWO kekal sebagai pemacu yang terus relevan kepada kemajuan wanita di seluruh Negara. Hakikatnya, masyarakat bandar kontemporari Malaysia tiada bezanya dengan masyarakat di kebanyakan negara maju. Wanita menjadi "boss" bukan lagi sesuatu yang pelik, dengan hampir satu pertiga pengurusan di sector swasta diterajui wanita. Sejak 2004, sasaran untuk mempunyai 30 peratus wanita di peringkat pembuat keputusan turut menjadi polisi kerajaan. Kini, sasaran di sektor swasta ialah untuk mempunyai kadar yang sama dalam senarai lembaga pengarah, dan ia mungkin dicapai tidak lama lagi. Semua ini adalah hasil perjuangan sebuah organisasi yang lahir untuk menuntut gaji saksama, 50 tahun lalu.

Ia kini sebuah pertubuhan induk yang mana isu yang diperjuangkannya amat meluas dan begitu banyak, sepertimana banyaknya badan gabungannya; meliputi bidang yang berbeza-beza seperti HIV/AIDS, pornografi hinggalah ke kemudahan kredit dan keusahawanan. Dari percukaian dan pelaburan asing hinggalah ke hak asasi manusia dan perundangan; wanita bandar dan luar bandar hinggalah ke kanak-kanak, hak penjagaan, rogol dan keganasan rumah tangga.

Berasaskan visinya yang jelas iaitu memastikan wanita berada dalam arus perdana menerusi polisi pembangunan nasional, NCWO sentiasa menyokong inisiatif kerajaan dengan tujuan menerapkan agenda wanita ke dalam semua polisi awam. Paling mutakhir ialah memastikan pembabitan wanita di dalam Dasar Transformasi Nasional (NTP), yang mengandungi Program Transformasi Ekonomi (ETP) dan Program Transformasi Kerajaan (GTP). NCWO berpandangan bahawa wanita adalah ejen kepada semua bentuk transformasi ini. Lebih daripada itu, memandangkan pentingnya Model Ekonomi Baru (NEM) kepada kejayaan NTP, Majlis menganggap wanita sudah bersedia dan mampu menangani cabaran serta menyumbang kepada kemajuan negara dalam rangka NEM dengan untuk mencipta ekonomi baru.



### The Women's Ministry

The jewel in the crown of the national feminist activism was, of course, a ministry for women's affairs. The NCWO stressed the need for a Women's Ministry that would work closely with other ministries to inject the women's perspective into every issue, liaising intimately to feminise all public policies. This last building block came into being in 2001 under the premiership of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Datuk Sri Shahrizat Jalil was to become Malaysia's first Women's Minister.

Today, 50 years on, the NCWO remains a relevant force in the advancement of women throughout the country. Indeed, contemporary urban Malaysia is no different from the most advanced societies. Women bosses have long lost its novelty, with the private sector management already a third feminised. Having 30 per cent women decision-makers in the public sector has been a government policy since 2004. Now it is also a private sector objective for its Board Rooms, to arrive at its target sooner rather than later. This is but a natural outcome for an organisation that came into existence on the struggle for equal pay.

That it is an umbrella organisation determined the breadth of issues embraced by the Council making it as wide ranging and as numerous as its affiliates: covering such disparate areas as HIV/AIDS, pornography at one end through to credit facilities and entrepreneurship at the other; from taxation and foreign investments through to human rights and laws; rural and urban women through to children, guardianship, rape and domestic violence.

Always true to its vision of mainstreaming women into national development policies, the NCWO without fail supports the government's initiatives so as to integrate the women's agenda within all public policy shifts. The latest is to ensure women's involvement in the National Transformation Policy (NTP), which comprises the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) and the Government Transformation Programme (GTP). The NCWO views women as agents of this transformation. And, too, given the importance of the New Economic Model (NEM) to the success of the NTP, the Council regards women as ready and able to meet the challenges faced and to contribute to the country's progress within the NEM by availing themselves of the opportunity to create new economies.



*Datin Paduka Seri Rosmah Mansor, isteri Perdana Menteri, diiringi ke Dewan untuk Jamuan Makan Malam Hari Wanita oleh Dato' Sri Shahrizat Jalil dan Prof. Tan Sri Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin*  
*Datin Paduka Seri Rosmah Mansor, wife of the Prime Minister being accompanied to the hall for a Women's Day dinner by Dato' Sri Shahrizat Jalil and Prof. Tan Sri Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin*



*Prof. Tan Sri Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin bersama Dato' Dr Noorul Ainur Mohd Nur (Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat) dan Tan Sri Rafiah Salim (Ketua NIEW)*  
*Prof. Tan Sri Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin with Dato' Dr Noorul Ainur Mohd Nur (Secretary General of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development) and Tan Sri Rafiah Salim (Head of NIEW)*



*Timbalan Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat, Dato' Harjeet Singh dan isterinya Datin Amreeta Kaur disambut oleh Dato' Faridah Khalid apabila mereka tiba di majlis NCWO*  
*The Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development Dato' Harjeet Singh and his wife Datin Amreeta Kaur being greeted by Dato' Faridah Khalid on arrival at a NCWO function*