

press release

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Standard Chartered Malaysia's women empowerment programme breaks new ground

Kuala Lumpur, 16 May 2018 – Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia recently held its women empowerment event as part of the Bank's on-going effort to promote gender parity. Themed #PressforProgress, which was also the theme for this year's International Women's Day, the event was focused on strategies aimed at empowerment in the changing world and women's positive contribution to the Malaysian economy.

The panel discussion saw esteemed and respected women leaders from various sectors such as: Her Excellency Vicki Treadell, British High Commissioner to Malaysia, Prof. Emerita Tan Sri Dr Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin, President, National Council of Women's Organisations, Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar, Chairman, Malaysia Debt Ventures; Datuk Yvonne Chia, Chairman, Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia; together with Standard Chartered's very own Mabel Lau, Chief Financial Officer and Sylvia Wong, Head Financial Markets. The panel was moderated by Low Ngai Yuen, Founder, WOMEN:girls and Aiza Azreen Ahmad, Director, Strategic Development, Axiata Digital.

Amongst some of the topics discussed at the forum include pressing issues pertaining to empowering the next generation of female leaders and how breaking the glass ceiling starts by changing the work culture.

"At Standard Chartered Bank, we view diversity and inclusion as a critical lever for business success in the long term. It enables us to unlock innovation, make better decisions and manage risk. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment that is free from bias and where everyone can realise their full potential, and in so doing, make a positive contribution to our organisation," said Abrar Anwar, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia in his welcoming speech. Abrar also sits on the Bank's global Diversity and Inclusion Council.

In Malaysia, 19.2% of board seats in the Top 100 listed companies on Bursa Malaysia were occupied by women as of 31 December 2017 – up from 16.6% in the same period last year*. Currently, nearly 60% of the Bank's total employees in Malaysia are women; the executive committee also has a strong 42% female representation. The Standard Chartered Malaysia Board comprises 30% women under the leadership of Chairman, Datuk Yvonne Chia, known as one of the top Malaysian women who broke the glass ceiling, when she became first woman CEO of a commercial bank in 1996.

In her keynote address, Datuk Yvonne Chia said, "Gender inequality exists everywhere in the world. It is just that gaps vary due to different cultures. We need to understand that people comprise both men and women who are complimentary to each other and not substitutes. More often than not, gender inequality arises due to stereotyping of roles, responsibilities and duties and even by profession. In order to make a difference and minimise the gap, women will need a lot of support and cooperation from men".

Standard Chartered Bank is committed towards supporting women empowerment, not just within the Bank, but also externally to its female clients and the community through various programmes. The Bank launched 'Goal' in Malaysia, its globally-acclaimed development programme which uses sport and life skills education to transform the lives of adolescent girls. It has reached over 2,700 girls to date. Its Education for Entrepreneurs has reached close to 100 women entrepreneurs and start-ups since its launch last year.

Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar, Chairman of Malaysia Debt Ventures, who is also the co-founding chair of 30% Club Malaysia chapter said, "We are seeing more Boards acknowledging that gender diversity makes good business sense. And with more qualified women making themselves available for board appointments, we are almost reaching our target of having at least one woman on Boards of the top 100 PLCs by 2018".

The Bank had also formed its Global Diversity and Inclusion Council early this year as an initiative to strengthen its' commitment to being a real employer of choice, and towards raising the bar and increasing the value of the brand. Driven by the imperative of ensuring diversity and inclusion forms the core of the Bank's business, the council is responsible for ensuring that the Bank is one where every individual feel valued and respected, and for executing the Bank's D&I agenda.

Her Excellency Vicki Treadell, British High Commissioner to Malaysia added, "Given my own Malaysian roots, I'd like to think that I'm not just a representative of modern multicultural Britain but that I also have great local credentials in terms of understanding Malaysia, its culture, its diversity and its people. Part of my human rights agenda in Malaysia, is to support women.

Women's economic and political empowerment are really important. Women are more confident in engaging in things if they feel economically empowered”.

The event was well attended by over 150 participants of executives, entrepreneurs, students, public-sector personnel and the Bank's employees.

*Source: <https://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2018/04/17/idris-jala-companies-still-giving-excuses/#yklDMefCdScfX47f.99>



Abrar A. Anwar, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia views diversity and inclusion as a critical lever for business success in the long term



Ipoh-born Her Excellency Vicki Treadell, British High Commissioner to Malaysia stressed that part of her human rights agenda in Malaysia is to support women



Panellists acknowledged the handful of male audience in the hall - men play a crucial role in institutional cultures and policies as well as addressing the women agenda



Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar, Chairman of Malaysia Debt Ventures, who is also co-founding chair of 30% Club Malaysia is excited to see that more Boards are recognising that gender diversity makes good business sense

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Note to Editors

Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia

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In 2001, Standard Chartered PLC established its third global technology & operations centre, Standard Chartered Global Business Services (formerly Scope International) in Malaysia – the first international bank to do so in the country. It provides software development, banking operations, IT support services and customer service capabilities to the Bank in up to 70 countries. It now houses the biggest software development company in the country, International Software Centre Malaysia and has a total workforce of more than 4,500 people.

Price Solutions Sdn Bhd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Standard Chartered PLC is also located in Malaysia. The company promotes and markets Standard Chartered's financial products in Malaysia through a network of direct sales agents. Standard Chartered Saadiq Berhad, Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia's Islamic Banking subsidiary was established in November 2008. It offers a full suite of Syariah-compliant products and services to individuals and corporates through its dedicated branches.

Standard Chartered employs over 7,000 employees in all its Malaysian operations.

Standard Chartered

We are a leading international banking group, with more than a 150-year history in some of the world's most dynamic markets. Our purpose is to drive commerce and prosperity through our unique diversity, and our heritage and values are expressed in our brand promise, Here for good.

We are present in more than 60 markets, with over 1,000 branches and around 3,000 ATMs.

Standard Chartered PLC is listed on the London and Hong Kong Stock Exchanges as well as the Bombay and National Stock Exchanges in India.

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