



## **Gender Equality in Singapore: An Action Plan for Progress**

Thursday, 3 June 2021

### **PROGRAMME**

9.00 am – 9.10 am

#### **Welcome Remarks**

Mr Janadas Devan  
Director  
Institute of Policy Studies

9.10 am – 9.30 am

#### **Opening Address**

Mdm Halimah Yacob  
President  
Republic of Singapore

9.30 am – 11.00 am

#### **PANEL I Equal Work, Equal Pay**

##### **Moderator**

Ms Tan Su Shan  
Group Head  
Institutional Banking  
DBS Bank

##### **Speakers**

Associate Professor Jessica Pan  
Department of Economics  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
National University of Singapore

Ms Carrie Tan  
Founder & Strategic Advisor  
Daughters Of Tomorrow and  
Member of Parliament  
Nee Soon GRC

Dr Juliana Chan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Wildtype Media Group

## **Question-and-Answer Session**

11.00 am – 11.30 am

### **Break**

11.30 am – 1.00 pm

## **PANEL II Home is Where the Work is**

### **Moderator**

Ms Iva Aminuddin  
Head  
Learning Futures Group  
Civil Service College, Singapore

### **Speakers**

Professor Paulin Straughan  
Dean of Students &  
Professor of Sociology (Practice)  
School of Social Sciences  
Singapore Management University

Professor Kalyani Mehta  
Former Professor for Gerontology and Social Work  
Gerontology Graduate Programme  
S R Nathan School of Human Development  
Singapore University of Social Sciences

Mr Benny Bong  
President  
Society Against Family Violence

### **Discussant**

Ms Sun Xueling  
Minister of State  
Ministry of Education and  
Ministry of Social and Family Development

## **Question-and-Answer Session**

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm

### **Lunch**

2.00 pm – 3.30 pm

## **PANEL III Mindsets and Minefields**

### **Moderator**

Ms Junie Foo  
President  
Singapore Council of Women's Organisations

## **Speakers**

Mr Bryan Tan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Centre for Fathering Ltd and  
Dads for Life

Ms Monica Baey  
Advocate

Mr Wendell Wong  
Director, Dispute Resolution &  
Co-Head, Investigations and Criminal Law Practice  
Drew & Napier LLC

Ms Danielle Pereira  
Spokesperson  
Aim for Zero  
Association of Women for Action and Research

## **Question-and-Answer Session**

3.30 pm – 4.00 pm

## **Break**

4.00 pm – 5.30 pm

## **Closing Dialogue**

## **Moderator**

Professor Lily Kong  
President  
Singapore Management University

## **Speakers**

Mr K Shanmugam  
Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law

Ms He Ting Ru  
Member of Parliament  
Sengkang GRC

## **Question-and-Answer Session**

5.30 pm

## **End**

## **OVERVIEW**

As Singapore embarks on a review of women's issues in a move towards greater gender equality, the IPS Women's Conference will bring together thought leaders, academics, activists, and community leaders to discuss the challenges Singaporean women face in a changing world.

The pandemic has led to dramatic changes in the lives of Singaporeans, potentially creating a "new normal" in how we function at work, at home, and in society. These changes have the potential to transform the lives of women and girls, offering them the opportunity to overcome traditional obstacles that have limited their social and economic advancement. But it also carries the risk of perpetuating — or even exacerbating — existing gender disparities across multiple domains.

The aim of the conference is to navigate the issues of gender imbalance and identify best practices for policy action to build a gender inclusive society.

The one-day forum will feature an opening address, three moderated panel discussions, and a closing dialogue. About 250 people from government, civil society, and business will be invited to join the in-person forum, with sessions live-streamed to an interactive, online audience.

### **Panel I: Equal Work, Equal Pay**

Over the last few decades, the share of women in the workforce has increased dramatically. Yet, their presence in the workplace alone does not entail equality. Both socially and structurally, women face hurdles to remain in the workforce and to be treated as equals. While the COVID-19 pandemic has created flexible work opportunities for women, it has also potentially exacerbated gender disparities in the workplace.

This panel explores disparities in opportunities for women in the formal economy, the informal economy, and the future economy. How do we create a workplace in which gender does not play a role in determining one's salary, benefits, and opportunities for success? What protections and benefits exist for women occupying jobs in the informal economy? While the future economy will largely be driven by STEM and ICT industries, women currently make up a small percentage of those within the industries. Why is this so? What can be done to bring more women into this rapidly growing field?

### **Panel II: Home is Where the Work is**

Singaporean women continue to take on the bulk of household and caregiving responsibilities; with the burden of household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, and eldercare left almost exclusively left to them. These responsibilities were challenging in the pre-COVID-19 era, but have been compounded by the rise of long-term work-from-home and home-based learning arrangements during the pandemic.

In this panel, we tackle questions about how we can make home an equitable and safe place for women. How can we ensure more equal sharing of childcare and household responsibilities? What are some "trickle-down" effects of this more gender-inclusive household on the economy and society? How do we better support women in this role as family caregiver

and recognise their unpaid contributions in this area? What can be done to reduce violence against women in the home and maintain their access to adequate protection and justice?

**Panel III:  
Mindsets and Minefields**

Gender inequalities are ultimately rooted in discriminatory power imbalances that are perpetuated throughout every level of society. Addressing attitudinal biases that maintain these gender disparities is key to creating a more gender inclusive society. For attitudes towards women to change, we need to consider the societal roles and expectations of men.

In this panel, we consider what it means to be a man in Singapore and how society's expectations of them would exacerbate gender inequality in Singapore? What role can institutions play to reduce negative attitudinal biases that impact the safety of women in everyday spaces, such as the workplace and school campuses? As Singapore becomes enmeshed in digital technology, how should online spaces be governed to ensure that technology-facilitated sexual violence is minimised, and that the digital world is a safe space for all to enjoy?

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*Last modified on 28 May 2021*