

## **WP's He Ting Ru shares about being asked gender stereotypical questions during GE 2015**

**Her fellow candidate Terence Tan was asked instead about the economy.**

***Jane Zhang***

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In the quest toward gender equality, women need to be mindful of their own attitudes toward other women as well, Workers' Party (WP) Member of Parliament He Ting Ru said in the [closing dialogue](#) of the Institute of Policy Studies' Women's Conference on Thursday (Jun. 3).

Responding to a question about Singapore media and its role in reinforcing gender stereotypes, He Ting Ru recounted some of her experiences on the campaign trail during the 2015 General Election.

### **Asked about relationship status, plan for children**

He Ting Ru shared about an anecdote from when she was running as a WP candidate for Marine Parade GRC during the 2015 General Election:

"What I found to be actually quite interesting then was that, because I was single young female candidate, I did end up with a lot of questions being thrown at me by journalists about my marital status, whether or not I was dating anybody, when I was going to have children.

You know, because they looked at me and they saw this young female person, and the major thought there was, when was I going off to start a family?"

She noted that her fellow Marine Parade GRC candidate Terence Tan — who was unmarried at the time, but has since married He Ting Ru — was asked instead about his predictions for Singapore's economy.

He Ting Ru added that many of the journalists who asked her the questions were female:

"So I think we need to be mindful that as women, sometimes we can be very harsh on women as well.

We need to be mindful of our own attitudes, and not to assume that just because there are a lot of female journalists that it definitely is not a problem [and] we should move on."

## **Many highly-educated female journalists: Shanmugam**

Prior to He Ting Ru's response, Minister for Home Affairs and Law K Shanmugam responded to the same question about gender stereotypes and media.

He said that there are many highly-educated women working in journalism and other areas of Singapore's workforce.

"I don't believe that these women that write articles need any mindset change," he had stated.

"I think they understand women's role; they understand and they realise that they are as good, if not better, and ability should be assessed not on the basis of gender, but what you produce."

He added that, in terms of gender equality in Singapore, "The glass is two-thirds full, but it's not fully full and there's still more to go."

Shanmugam called for a whole-of-society effort to address the issue of gender stereotypes that may be perpetuated by media.

However, he said, "By and large, [I don't think] our media crosses many lines compared with the media elsewhere."