



INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES
**WOMEN'S
CONFERENCE**

Thursday, 3 June 2021

About the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) was established in 1988 as an independent think-tank to study and generate public policy ideas in Singapore. IPS became an autonomous research centre of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore in 2008. Today, IPS continues to analyse public policy, build bridges between thought leaders, and communicate its findings to a wide audience. The Institute examines issues of critical national interest across a variety of fields, and studies the attitudes and aspirations of Singaporeans through surveys of public perception. It adopts a multi-disciplinary approach in its analyses and takes the long-term view in its strategic deliberation and research.

For more information about IPS, please visit www.lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips.



Gender Equality in Singapore: An Action Plan for Progress

IPS is grateful to the following organisations for their support
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Introduction

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Women’s Conference will be held on Thursday, 3 June 2021. The theme of the conference is “Gender Equality in Singapore: An Action Plan for Progress”.

As the Singapore government 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, 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: (1) Equal Work, Equal Pay; (2) Home is Where the Work is; and (3) Mindsets and Minefields, and a closing dialogue.

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 Social and Family Development and
Ministry of Education

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

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

Ms Monica Baey
Advocate

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

Conference Brief

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 these 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 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?

Biographical Notes

Monica BAEY is an advocate for sexual violence survivors. As a student at the National University of Singapore, she drew attention to sexual harm in the university setting after an experience of sexual voyeurism, eventually driving a major shift in attitudes towards sexual violence. She was honoured with AWARE's "Woman of Courage" Award at the 2019 AWARE Ball.

Benny BONG is the President of the Society Against Family Violence (SAFV), a non-profit organisation that does research, provides public education and conducts training to those providing assistance to victims of violence and treatment to perpetrators. He is one of the founding members of SAFV which was established 30 years ago. He was one of the three researchers of the Society's International Violence Against Women Survey (Singapore) study in 2010. He has over 35 years of experience in counselling individuals, couples and families. He is currently the director of The Family Therapist, a private counselling and training agency. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the National University of Singapore and a Master's in Social Work from McGill University in Canada. In 2011, he became the first recipient of the AWARE Hero Award for his work in preventing family violence and violence against women.

Juliana CHAN is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Wildtype Media Group, Asia's leading STEM-focused media company, spanning digital, video, print, custom publishing and events. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Natural Sciences from the University of Cambridge, and a PhD in Biology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Awards and accolades she has received include the L'Oréal-UNESCO Fellowship for Women in Science, the Singapore Youth Award and MIT Technology Review's "10 Innovators Under 35" (Asia). She is a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum (WEF), and she serves on the WEF Technology Pioneers Selection Committee.

Janadas DEVAN, Director of the Institute of Policy Studies, was educated at the National University of Singapore and Cornell University in the United States. He was a journalist, writing for *The Straits Times* and broadcasting for Radio Singapore International, before being appointed the Government's Chief of Communications at the Ministry of Communications and Information in 2012. He is concurrently Deputy Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office.

Junie FOO is the current President of Singapore Council of Women's Organisations. She is also Chief Executive Officer at Methodist Welfare Services, a multi-service charitable organisation serving the disadvantaged in community elder care, residential care, family services and poverty alleviation. A champion of women advancing into senior leadership roles, she views a focus on gender diversity within organisations to be both a recipe for business success and a socially responsible measure.

A co-founder and immediate past chair of BoardAgender, Ms Foo is a former president of Financial Women's Association and has held senior management positions in international banks. She is a Fellow and council member of the Singapore Institute of Directors where she chairs board diversity and appointment services. She sits on the board of the Singapore Art Museum and SIM Group as well as the advisory council of the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

HALIMAH Yacob was sworn in as the 8th President of the Republic of Singapore on 14 September 2017. She served in the National Trades Union Congress for 33 years. She held various positions, as Deputy Secretary-General; Director of departments including Legal Services, Women's Development and Labour Studies; and Executive Secretary of the United Workers of Electronic and Electrical Industries. She was on various national committees including the Economic Review Committee.

She was Singapore's representative in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for 12 years and the first Singaporean to be elected into the ILO, where she represented workers in many ILO committees. In 2001, she was elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) for the Jurong Group Representation Constituency (GRC). Her final and fourth term as an MP was in the Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC.

In 2011, she was appointed Minister of State for Community Development and Sports, where she introduced various programmes for seniors and enhanced services for the disabled, and also laid the foundation for Social Service Offices. In 2013, she was elected as Speaker of Parliament, the first woman to hold the position.

With her passion for social causes, Mdm Halimah is patron to more than 40 charitable and community organisations. She also championed women's issues and was awarded Woman of the Year by Her World Magazine (2003) and the AWARE Heroine Award (2011). She was inducted into the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame (2014) and conferred the Berita Harian Achiever of the Year (2001). Mdm Halimah obtained her law degree and Masters in Law from the National University of Singapore (NUS). In 2016, she was conferred Honorary Doctor of Laws by NUS.

HE Ting Ru is a Member of Parliament for Sengkang GRC, Chair of Sengkang Town Council and the Deputy Organising Secretary of the Workers' Party. She advocates for better access to opportunities and sustainability of our systems, with a focus on gender and women's issues. She trained and practised as a solicitor of England & Wales with Clifford Chance in London and is head of legal and communications at a listed multinational corporation in Singapore.

Iva Aminuddin is a working mother with two sets of twin boys, ages 10 and 3. She also heads the Learning Futures Group at the Civil Service College, Singapore (CSC). A career public service learning and organisational change practitioner, Ms Iva has served as Deputy Director at CSC's Institute of Public Sector Leadership overseeing the design, development and delivery of public sector whole-of-government leadership milestone programmes. She led CSC's Applied Simulation Training Laboratory (CAST) from 2013 to 2015 and was Assistant Director, Change Capacity and Innovation at the PS21 Office, Public Service Division of the Prime Minister's Office, Singapore from 2011 to 2013. Ms Iva's capability development experience also includes UNDP, World Bank and ADB funded capability development initiatives for governments in ASEAN and South Asia (2005–2010).

She has a Masters in Learning and Organisational Change from Northwestern University, a Masters in International Studies as well as a Bachelor of Social Science in Political Science with Honours from the National University of Singapore.

KALYANI Mehta was a professor in the Gerontology Programme at the Singapore University of Social Sciences. Her research interests include policies relating to the elderly, family caregiving and long-term care, and integrated healthcare planning for an ageing population. She is a trained social worker, having received her Masters and PhD in Social Work from the National University of Singapore (NUS), and had taught at the NUS Department of Social Work and UniSIM's School of Human Development and Social Services. She has worked as a consultant to the Asia Development Research Forum and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on ageing issues. Additionally, she served as a Nominated Member of Parliament from 2007 to 2009, where she spoke on ageing policies and services.

Lily KONG is the Singapore Management University (SMU)'s fifth president, and the first Singaporean to lead the 21-year-old university. She is also the first Singaporean woman to head a university in Singapore. She was previously Provost of SMU, Vice Provost and Vice President at the National University of Singapore (in various portfolios), and Executive Vice President (Academic) of Yale-NUS College.

Professor Kong is internationally known for her research on social and cultural change in Asian cities, focusing on a range of issues ranging from religion, cultural policy and creative economy, urban heritage and conservation, to smart cities. An award-winning researcher and teacher, Professor Kong has received five international fellowship awards and has also won the Association of American Geographers Robert Stoddard Award for Distinguished Service (Geography of Religion and Belief Systems). Professor Kong was appointed as a Member of the Public Service Commission in January 2009. She was conferred the Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 2006 and the Public Service Star (BBM) in 2020, and was among the 25 recognised on *Forbes Asia's* Power Businesswomen list in 2020.

Jessica PAN is an Associate Professor (with tenure) of Economics and Dean's Chair of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She is also a Research Fellow at the IZA - Institute of Labor Economics and the Centre for Economic Policy Research. She is a labour economist with research interests in understanding gender differences in the labour market and educational outcomes. She was awarded the Faculty Award for Promising Researcher by NUS in 2015.

She was Visiting Associate Professor at the Department of Economics and Visiting Associate Research Scholar at the Industrial Relations Section at Princeton University from 2014 to 2015. She holds an MBA and PhD from the University of Chicago, Booth School of Business.

Danielle PEREIRA is a lawyer and spokesperson for AWARE's Aim for Zero campaign, which fights for a society free from sexual violence. She has campaigned for zero tolerance of workplace sexual harassment across Singapore and works within the community to build a culture of support for those who have survived sexual violence. She conducts ongoing fundraising efforts for AWARE through the provision of weekly community yoga classes. She received a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Bristol and was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2012.

K SHANMUGAM is the Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law. Mr Shanmugam has been Law Minister since May 2008, and concurrently:

- (1) Second Minister for Home Affairs, May 2008 – October 2010;
- (2) Minister for Home Affairs, October 2010 – May 2011, and since September 2015;
- (3) Minister for Foreign Affairs, May 2011 – September 2015;

As Minister for Home Affairs, he oversaw a comprehensive overhaul of the Penal Code, to confer greater protections for vulnerable groups, including women and children.

As Minister for Law, he made significant changes to enhance access to justice, and place the child's welfare and best interests at the centre of the family justice system. Prior to entering Cabinet, Mr Shanmugam was a Senior Partner at Allen & Gledhill LLP, and Head of Litigation & Dispute Resolution. Allen & Gledhill was then the largest law firm in Singapore. He was in practice for over 20 years and was appointed Senior Counsel in 1998.

Paulin STRAUGHAN is Professor of Sociology and Dean of Students at Singapore Management University (SMU). She is also the Director of the Centre for Research on Successful Ageing in SMU, a centre dedicated to finding ways to ensure and improve well-being among the elderly in Singapore's ageing society. Her research interests centre around sociology of family and medical sociology. She has published in both sociology and medical journals, including *Social Science and Medicine*, *Cancer*, and *Cancer Causes and Control*. Her books include *Marriage Dissolution in Singapore: Revisiting Family Values and Ideology in Marriage*, and *Ultra-Low Fertility in Pacific Asia: Trends, Causes and Policy Issue* (with Gavin Jones and Angelique Chan). She was a Nominated Member of Parliament from 2009 to 2011, during which she advocated for work-life balance and a more pro-family social environment. She has been awarded multiple Teaching Excellence Awards from the National University of Singapore during her career in education and also received the Public Administration Medal (Bronze) in recognition of her work in 2010.

SUN Xueling is currently the Minister of State in the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the Ministry of Education. She also serves as a board member of the Chinese Development Assistance Council. Ms Sun co-chairs the National Review on Singapore Women's Development and the Taskforce on Family Violence. She is also Adviser to the Youth Mental Well-being Network and a member of the COVID-19 Mental Wellness Taskforce. She is Vice-Chair of the Board for the Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism and Chairperson of the Committee to Promote Chinese Language Learning.

Before entering politics, Ms Sun spent more than a decade in the private sector in finance and investments. She was Director, Investments Group at Temasek International and Director, Deutsche Bank AG. Ms Sun received her Master of Science in International Political Economy from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Bryan TAN is Chief Executive Officer of Dads for Life and the Centre for Fathering. He was formerly a senior officer with the Singapore Armed Forces before he made a mid-career switch to the social services sector in 2016 to serve fathers and the “fatherless” in Singapore. The Centre for Fathering is a non-profit organisation founded in 2000 to promote active and involved fathering and address issues caused by fatherlessness in Singapore.

Carrie TAN is the Founder and Strategic Advisor of Daughters Of Tomorrow, a charity with IPC status that provides low-income women with skills-training and job-bridging support, and Member of Parliament for Nee Soon GRC. She is also actively engaged with various government agencies such as the Ministry of Manpower and the Ministry of Social and Family Development, to shape policies and their implementation to enable social mobility for the bottom 15 per cent of Singaporeans. She was the Honouree for the Children, World Peace and Human Rights category in the Ten Outstanding Young Persons Award by Junior Chambers International in Singapore in 2016. She has a Bachelor of Arts from the National University of Singapore and a Masters in Public Administration from Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

TAN Su Shan is Group Head of Institutional Banking at DBS, and she also serves as the President Commissioner for PT Bank DBS Indonesia. Prior to leading the institutional banking business, she was Group Head of Consumer Banking and Wealth Management business for close to a decade. Before joining DBS, Ms Tan was Morgan Stanley’s Head of Private Wealth Management for Southeast Asia. She has also worked at Citibank and prior to that at ING Barings in London, Tokyo and Hong Kong.

Ms Tan is an independent board director of Mapletree North Asia Commercial Trust and Aetos Holdings, both Temasek-linked entities. Ms Tan graduated with a Master of Arts from Oxford University in the United Kingdom, where she studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics. She has also completed executive leadership courses in Harvard Business School, Stanford Business School and Singularity University.

Wendell WONG is Co-Head of Drew & Napier's Investigations and Criminal Law Practice and was a former deputy public prosecutor with the Attorney-General's Chambers. He is a highly respected civil commercial and criminal litigator. Leading legal publications recognise Mr Wong as a leading practitioner in dispute resolution, corporate investigations/anti-corruption and white-collar crime. He is quoted as one of the most eminent business crime defence and investigations lawyers in Singapore.

Mr Wong is the current chairman of the Criminal Practice Committee of The Law Society of Singapore and member of the Criminal Procedure Rules Committee. He is also the Treasurer of the International Bar Association's Anti-Corruption Committee. Mr Wong is a strong advocate for pro-bono work and access to justice in Singapore.

IPS Women's Conference 2021
Gender Equality in Singapore: An Action Plan for Progress

This conference is organised by Dr Carol Soon, Dr Jacqueline Tilley, Mr Fiachra Macfadden, Ms Ruby Thiagarajan, Ms Vani Gunasilan and the administration team of the Institute of Policy Studies.



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