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RETURN TO WORKFORCE, WOMEN URGED

Only 56.2pc have careers despite talent, resilience, says deputy minister

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THE government wants women who paused their careers in order to start a family to rejoin the workforce.

Deputy Finance Minister Lim Hui Ying said the Statistics Department's latest figures showed that only 56.2 per cent of the female population were in the workforce, compared with 82.3 per cent for men.

Malaysian women, she added, were talented and resilient, making up 65 per cent of undergraduates. However, many were forced to leave their careers to care for their families.

Lim said the government valued women for their role as the backbone of their families and their contributions to national development.

To support their return to the workforce, various initiatives have been introduced.

"The 'Returnship' programme by Bank Negara Malaysia and the Securities Commission helps women re-enter the industry by providing necessary assistance.

"The government is also improving childcare and elderly care facilities to help women balance family and career responsibilities," she said during an International Women's Day event at the Chowrasta Market here.

She added that strengthening support systems for working women would not only benefit households, but also boost the economy.

With Penang on track to become an ageing state, where a quarter of its population will be over 60 by 2040, Lim said she would work with the state government and assemblymen to speed up the development of elderly care, as well as childcare, centres.

Earlier, Lim and Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow distributed 2,000 flowers to women in conjunction with International Women's Day, an annual affair in the state since 2000.

"We need more women to enter the workforce as we are facing labour and talent shortages," Chow said.

"Strengthening the ecosystem that supports working women is key to addressing this challenge."



Lim Hui Ying

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