

WOMEN'S DAY 1990 IN MALAYSIA

Over 30% of funds disbursed through the Canada Fund in Malaysia are to projects which have a direct benefit to women. This is in keeping with Canada's development policy to emphasise women in development. The type of projects have been varied to meet a cross-section of requirements. One deserving particular mention is the recent Women's Day 1990 celebration organized by the National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO).

The first Women's Day was held on August 25, 1962, bringing Malaysian women from all walks of life. For the first time in the history of Malaysia, women's sections from political parties, welfare, religious and professional organizations together with trade unions and housewives spoke together, with one voice and as one united body, to the government and the nation about issues of vital importance. There was a need for the newly-independent nation to recognize women as equal partners since they comprised 50% of the population and worked alongside men in the rice fields, tin mines, rubber estates, on road and railway construction sites as well as in the construction industry.

The unity achieved through the first Women's Day culminated in the formation of the NCWO exactly one year later. It was a singular achievement as women in Malaysia recognized the need for a council to serve all women NGOs.



HRH The Sultanah of Kedah and other dignitaries, including the Prime Minister's wife Dato' Seri Dr Siti Hasmah (third from left) and the Acting High Commissioner to Malaysia, Michael Conway (second from right) at the opening of the Women's Day celebrations

The 1990 national celebrations of Women's Day paid tribute to women artists and writers by holding an exhibition of their work. Publication of the exhibition catalogue, entitled "Women and Creativity", was made possible through funds from the Canada Fund. The highlight of this year's celebrations was the week-long exhibition to display the works of established women artists and writers. It was officially opened by HRH the Sultanah of Kedah, Tuanku Hajah Bahiyah binti Almarhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman, an artist in her own right. Notable dignitaries present included the Prime Minister's wife Dato' Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, as well as members of the diplomatic corps.

In her opening address, Her Royal Highness called on women to prepare themselves for the challenges

brought about by the technological advancements and scientific progress of the 21st century. But she reminded women not to forget their crucial role as mothers and wives, as future generations depend on them. She praised NCWO for the effort taken to produce the Memorandum on the National Policy on Women. (Development of this National Policy was assisted by the Canada Fund. In 1989, the NCWO received financial support for a series of national-level workshops to collect data and formulate the framework for the National Policy.)

Over 1,200 people witnessed the exhibit which was a success in highlighting women's significant contribution to the progress of the arts in Malaysia.

GENDER ANALYSIS TRAINING IN SINGAPORE



Gender analysis training seminar

From August 29 to 31, 1990, the Asian Institute of Management conducted a Gender Analysis Training Session in Singapore for participants drawn from each ASEAN country who had worked on related CIDA projects in the region. This represented the last regionally sponsored training delivered by the Asian Institute of Management to address the role of women in development projects. Seventeen participants gathered for three days of training and received awards from Mr Dick Gold, Deputy Executive Director of the Canada-ASEAN center. This training has been part of a regionally sponsored CIDA project to address women's issues in the ASEAN region.