



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Pixel Perfect Digital Space: #InvestInWomen Forum Addresses Online Inclusivity

Kuala Lumpur, 5 March 2024 - Echoing the resounding call of International Women's Day 2024 to 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress', the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum (Content Forum) and the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Coalition of Women Organization (KLSCWO) joined forces to host a dynamic discussion titled "*#InvestInWomen - Inclusivity and Empowerment in the Digital Space.*" The event aimed to inspire inclusion and address pivotal issues concerning women's experiences in the digital sphere.

Over 100 participants converged at the Connexion Conference & Event Centre for this transformative dialogue, drawing perspectives and insights from esteemed speakers, including Aireen Omar, President (Investment & Ventures) of Capital A; Tehmina Kaoosji, Independent Broadcast Journalist; Maria Abdullah, Women's Rights Activist, and Serene Lim, Advocate and Researcher in Online Gender-Based Violence, and Dr Kiranjit Kaur, Vice-President of KLSCWO and council member of the Content Forum.

YB Teo Nie Ching, Deputy Minister of Communications, delivered the keynote address. Championing gender equality in the digital space, she emphasised, "While celebrating the remarkable strides made by women in the digital realm, it's imperative to recognise that our journey is not devoid of challenges. Online harassment and abuse remain significant hurdles that demand our collective attention."

Highlighting the urgency, she called for everyone to play a role in self-regulation and lodge reports on such online abuse on social media platforms, MCMC, or the Content Forum. She stressed, "Building awareness and resilience within our communities is crucial, as it not only safeguards women against scams but also empowers us to engage in the digital economy and harness its opportunities fully. I am confident that through continued collaboration with organisations like the Content Forum, we can work together to create a safer and more inclusive digital space."

Mediha Mahmood, the Chief Executive Officer of the Content Forum, echoed this sentiment, stating, “From our work here at the Content Forum, we bear witness that online harassment, threats and hate speech plague far too many women. And now we have the challenges raised by AI, where women’s images can be digitally manipulated and abused without consent – contributing to an existing culture of objectification and exploitation.” She added, “We are committed to working together to address these challenges head-on and instigating long-lasting change for the better.”

Bridging the Gender Gap and Empowering Women in Digital Spaces

Opening the panel session, Aireen discussed the impact of digital technology on society, particularly concerning marginalisation. She highlighted the challenges faced in accessing talents for digital transformation and emphasised the need to bridge the gender gap in tech-related fields. She further stressed the importance of aligning education with industry demands to prevent marginalisation and ensure progress for everyone.

Continuing to address inclusivity, Maria stressed the importance of understanding the discrimination women face and reiterated the need for them to access information, skills, resources, and social security to overcome challenges, particularly in the digital space and employment opportunities. She emphasised the need to empower women with confidence in utilising tools such as mobile apps effectively, alongside broader support from government, corporations, and communities.

Creating Safer Digital Environments

Tehnima presented insights into the rise of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), pointing out risks for women in online media, including algorithm biases and hypersexualisation fueled by generative AI. She stressed the need for diverse representation in the tech industry, which remains predominantly male-dominated, and for accurate journalism to combat these challenges effectively.

Echoing similar sentiments, Serene discussed the persistent challenge of online gender-based violence, noting the lack of clear definitions and fragmented data available in Malaysia. She emphasised the urgent need for cohesive approaches to address gender-based violence in digital spaces and its impact on women's rights. Additionally, she highlighted the pervasive sense of

uncertainty and fear among women in digital spaces, prompting many to withdraw. These insights reveal a dire need for concerted efforts to combat online violence and create safer digital environments.

Following the panel discussion, an interactive sharing session was conducted with participants to solicit feedback on provisions concerning women and gender within the Content Code 2022. This exchange aimed to identify areas for improvement and clarity, fostering a more robust and inclusive content ecosystem for the future.

Towards a More Equitable Future

In closing the event, Dr Kiranjit Kaur, who spoke on behalf of Puan Anita Aqeela Hiong, President of KLSCWO, said, “Through our concerted efforts, we want to prioritise enhancing women’s livelihoods and economic empowerment through education and knowledge. We stand wholeheartedly behind initiatives fostering gender equality and digital literacy in Malaysia, recognising this event as a pivotal step towards empowering women and propelling us towards a more equitable and sustainable future.”

The #InvestInWomen forum served as a beacon of progress, sparking insightful discussions and garnering meaningful contributions from all participants at the event. Through collaborative efforts, this event aimed to catalyse positive change, laying the foundation for a future where women can flourish in a safer online environment.

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ABOUT THE CONTENT FORUM

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) is an independent self-regulatory industry body registered under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and designated by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (CMA’98) to oversee and promote self-regulation of content over the electronic networked medium. The Content Forum consists of key players in the content industry, i.e., advertisers, advertising agencies, broadcasters, content creators/distributors, audiotext hosting service providers, advertising agencies, internet service providers, and civic groups.

Aimed at facilitating self-regulation, which provides an additional layer of consumer protection that complements the legal framework, the Content Forum is committed to governing and promoting the creation, distribution, and consumption of electronic-networked content.

As an industry self-regulatory body, the Content Forum comprises key members of the communications and multimedia content industry, including broadcasters, advertisers, content creators, internet access service providers, and civic groups. This dynamic and robust representation of industry practitioners ensures that content standards continue to be developed with the objective of establishing a level playing field in the industry.

The Content Forum is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code (“the Content Code”). The Content Code was prepared by the Content Forum and first registered with MCMC on 1st September 2004. The Content Code is the principal source for industry self-regulation as it contains governing standards and best practices for content dissemination within the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia. The main objective of the Content Code is to outline procedures of self-regulation that provides the platform for creativity, innovation and healthy growth of a fast-evolving industry.

The Content Forum houses a Complaints Bureau that is empowered to address all complaints relating to content disseminated over electronic networks. The Complaints Bureau is empowered to investigate possible breaches of the Content Code, mediate disputes, adjudicate cases, publish orders, and impose sanctions where necessary. The Complaints Bureau accepts complaints from industry players and the general public. Additionally, it plays an advisory role to any party that requires guidance on electronic content matters.

ABOUT THE KUALA LUMPUR AND SELANGOR COALITION OF WOMEN ORGANIZATION (KLSCWO)

Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Coalition of Women Organization (KLSCWO) is a coalition of Women and Women organizations in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, as a consulting body, advisor, coordinator, non-political or religious or racial. The Association is formed to unite women’s organizations and work with such organizations at national, regional and international levels and their agencies with a commitment to work to improve women’s standing by improving their standard of living in society and improving their economy through education and knowledge.

The KLSCWO also actively supports efforts in content and digital spaces, providing resources and executing initiatives to promote women's rights and equality through digital advocacy and awareness efforts.

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