

# More can be done to promote gender equality: Grace Fu

Minister notes positive changes with more women in economic activities, leading family businesses

**MALAVIKA MENON**

While the fact that more women are participating in economic activities reflects the evolution of gender relations in Singapore, more still needs to be done to promote gender equality, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu said yesterday.

Ms Fu delivered her remarks on women's development during the International Women's Day 2021 Conference, which was organised by the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The hybrid event was held at the Trade Association Hub in Jurong Town Hall Road and streamed online.

Ms Fu said: "The increasing participation of women in economic activities and the growing number of women holding leadership positions in family businesses reflect the evolution of gender relations in our society. In the past, family businesses were typically inherited by men.

"We have seen positive changes on this front, with more balanced gender ratios in senior management in family businesses. However, there continues to be room for improvement when it comes to gender equality."

During her address, Ms Fu also noted the importance of fostering conversations on gender



Ms Grace Fu also said there is a need to ensure diverse groups hear one another's views.  
PHOTO: SINGAPORE CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

equality among Singaporeans.

She said: "We need to ensure that diverse groups – including men, youth and seniors – have the opportunity to hear and appreciate one another's views, to deepen understand-

ing on how we can foster greater gender equality."

"It is important to involve men so that they are exposed to different perspectives and can better understand the challenges faced by their mothers,

wives and daughters, and help to bring about positive change," she added.

The conference included a panel discussion titled Women Leadership in Driving Sustainable Family Businesses, which featured parents and daughters helping family businesses together discussing keys to success and the role of women in building businesses with enduring legacies and heritage.

## PANEL

The female participants of the panel included group head of corporate development at Luxasia Sabrina Chong, executive chair and managing director of Health Management International Gan See Khem, executive director and group chief executive officer of Health Management International Chin Wei Jia and group CEO and assistant manager of operations at Jumbo Group Ashley Ang.

They discussed the importance of cultivating diversity within their organisations and equality-driven hiring practices. The panellists also discussed the impact of Covid-19 on their organisations and how the pandemic has given businesses pause to restructure for a sustainable future.

The conference comes ahead of International Women's Day which falls on March 8.

mmala@sph.com.sg

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"We have seen positive changes on this front, with more balanced gender ratios in senior management in family businesses. However, there continues to be room for improvement when it comes to gender equality." During her address, Ms Fu also noted the importance of fostering conversations on gender equality among Singaporeans.

She said: "We need to ensure that diverse groups - including men, youth and seniors - have the opportunity to hear and appreciate one another's views, to deepen understanding on how we can foster greater gender equality."

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