

MINORITY SHAREHOLDER WATCHDOG GROUP

BADAN PENGAWAS PEMEGANG SAHAM MINORITI BERHAD

(Incorporated in Malaysia – Company No. 524989-M)

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Still behind 30% target for women in corporate boards

Malaysia has sufficient female employees in the workforce, however, more effort is required to achieve the target

by MOKHRIZ MOKHTAR

MALAYSIA still has a long way to go in achieving its target of having women make up 30% of corporate boards by 2016, according to Minority Shareholder Watchdog Group (MSWG).

MSWG GM for corporate services Lya Rahman said although Malaysia currently has sufficient female employees in the workforce, however, in term of developing them into qualified decision-makers, more time and effort is required to achieve the target.

"Now we have about 11% (female participation), it is still far from the 30% target. I'm not sure if we are able to meet the target by 2016.

"However, we should always prioritise quality over quantity. We don't want companies appointing women just to reach



Pic by Muhd Amin Noharul

(From left) Lya, Telekom Malaysia Bhd compliance and company secretary and chief legal Idrus Ismail, Aberdeen Asset Management CEO Gerald Ambrose and Malaysia KPMG Partner and Risk Consulting head Lee Min On at the conference in Kuala Lumpur

the target. Promotions have to be by way of merit," she told reporters after the "Corporate Governance: Balancing Rules & Practices" conference held in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

To recap, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak had announced on April 28 that the government will increase the number of women as decision-makers to 30% by 2016 through its strategic

reform initiatives or human capital development.

However, Lya said it is quite impossible to reach the target by next year as it takes time to mould a person into a qualified leader.

She believes companies should not appoint female leaders into the board just to achieve the target and expects companies to prioritise quality over quantity.

According to MSWG's Malaysian-Asean corporate governance report, a total of 9% or 571 out of 6,270 directors on public listed companies' boards in 2014 are women, out of which 226 are EDs and 345 are non-EDs.

In 2013, 8.6% or 534 out of 6,177 directors were women directors, out of which 221 and 118 were EDs and non-EDs respectively.