



Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
STATEMENT AT THE 25TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
MALAYSIA'S UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OUTCOME
Statement delivered by Yu Ren Chung, Geneva, 20 March 2014

1. Thank you Madame/Mr President; greetings from the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women's Aid Organisation Malaysia, a member of COMANGO.ⁱ
2. We congratulate Malaysia for accepting several recommendations on women's rights, including:
 - 2.1. From Colombia to "launch a comprehensive national policy on gender equality",ⁱⁱ and
 - 2.2. From Sierra Leone to "submit [its] overdue reports on CEDAW and CRPD".ⁱⁱⁱ
3. But we are disappointed:
 - 3.1. Malaysia rejected all seven recommendations to remove its reservations to CEDAW, CRC, and CRPD.^{iv} Malaysia stated during its review that it is "unfounded" that Malaysia's "Islamic Family Law ... discriminates Muslim women on marriage issues."^v Thus, Malaysia should have no objections to removing its reservations^{vi} to Article 16 of CEDAW, on equality in marriage.
 - 3.2. Malaysia rejected Canada's recommendation to criminalise marital rape.^{vii} When a woman gets married, she is still entitled to say no.
4. On children's rights:
 - 4.1. We congratulate Malaysia for moving to abolish caning in schools,^{viii} but we note the government's comment that "corporal punishment including whipping ... remain valid and legal".^{ix}
 - 4.2. Malaysia accepted two recommendations to ensure birth registration for all children,^x and five recommendations to improve education for persons with disabilities.^{xi} Free primary education still does not extend to non-citizen children.^{xii}
 - 4.3. Malaysia stated that child marriage has "never been a trend". In Malaysia, Muslim girls aged 16 can be legally married; and girls below 16 and boys below 18 can be married with special permission. In 2012, more than 1,000 such special permissions were given.^{xiii} Children below 18 are girls and boys, not brides and grooms.
5. The government has directly and indirectly harassed human rights groups which participated in the UPR, including declaring the coalition COMANGO illegal.^{xiv} Moving forward, we hope the government will meaningfully engage with NGOs.
6. Malaysia has made progress which we all recognise; but much more needs to be done. We look forward to working with the government to continue to improve the situation of women, children, and all individuals.

Thank you.