

## **GRB Networking Dinner**

**070611 | PENANG**

### **SPEECH OF PUAN MAIMUNAH SHARIF (REPRESENTING YB CHOW KON YEOW)**

Yang Berhormat Puan Chong Eng, President of 3Gs

Yang Berbahagia Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib, Director of KANITA, USM

Yang Berusaha Mr. Steven Sim, Executive Director of 3Gs and MPSP Councillor

Our guests from Australia, Prof. Rhonda Sharp and her husband, Dr. Ray Broomhill

Friends, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, allow me to convey sincere apologies from YB Chow Kon Yeow, the State EXCO for Local Government, for not being with us tonight as he is away on an overseas assignment.

I would like to also thank the organiser, 3Gs for hosting us and giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of YB Chow.

MPSP is very proud to have worked with such dynamic organisations promoting gender justice as 3Gs and KANITA. This Advanced GRB workshop is actually the THIRD programme by 3Gs-KANITA which we have sent our officials to attend. The first was an introduction to a gender equality and good governance workshop in July last year, followed by the first GRB workshop in February 2011.

In fact almost immediately after the February GRB workshop, MPSP formed the Gender Mainstreaming and OKU Committee, which among others, seeks to mainstream gender in our policies and operations. One of the first act of the Committee was to plan for the forthcoming FOURTH workshop with 3Gs-KANITA. I am happy to inform you tonight that Councillors, heads of departments and senior officials of MPSP will be participating in a workshop on 16 June titled: "Introduction to Gender Equality and Good Governance in Local Government". This is to provide a gender perspective to our top decision makers in order to gear MPSP towards narrowing gender gaps in the municipality.

On the 9th of May last month, 3Gs and KANITA sent a delegation to pay a visit to MPSP in our head office at Bandar Perda. I was impressed by the fact that one of our Councillors, Mr. Steven Sim, is the Executive Director of 3Gs. To have a male leader advocating equality for women is indeed not only touching but inspiring. I am a woman and I know the challenges we face in the market place not least in the civil service. Thus when 3Gs and KANITA came to me and proposed a 3 year project to implement GRB in MPSP, I immediately knew it could be one of the most important decisions i would make as the President of MPSP. I am fully supportive of

the project and I hope MPSP, 3Gs and KANITA will continue to work towards this realising the institutionalisation of GRB in local government in Penang.. Aside from our Councillor Mr. Steven Sim, our Finance Director, En. Hairay has also participated in drafting the three year project proposal. I understand that Prof. Rhonda will also give her inputs in the next few days. Thus I am confident, we will have a very solid roadmap towards implementing GRB in MPSP.

This is a networking dinner, so I do not want to hold you up with a very long speech. Suffice to say, MPSP being the first local government to establish a gender mainstreaming mechanism will fully support the agenda of the Penang State Government to create a more socially and gender just society. In fact, I sense my Councillors and my colleagues in the Council are more sensitive to gender needs these days. They know I am watching, and they know Mr. Steven is watching. We will work together with any groups, especially those such as 3Gs and KANITA which have vast experiences and a strong knowledge base about the issues they are advocating. I hope that we can draw up the three year plan as soon as possible and be the first local government to implement GRB and close the gender gaps in our municipality.

Thank you very much. Enjoy your dinner!