

Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

29 January 2014

AG spoof ceremony recognising sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia wins international contest

PETALING JAYA – An annual spoof awards ceremony organised by the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG), the “Aiyoh... Wat Lah?!” Awards, was announced as a winner of the global End Gender Discrimination Now! contest.

“We are delighted that the Aiyoh... Wat Lah?! Awards has received this international recognition,” said Yu Ren Chung of Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO), one of the nine women’s rights organisations that make up JAG.

“This international recognition will raise the profile of the already popular Awards, including of course its objective of raising awareness on sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia in Malaysia.”

Three winners were selected from more than 250 submissions from 63 countries. The contest organisers announced that the Aiyoh... Wat Lah?! Awards won the GenTruth Prize “for courage in shedding light on new or growing forms of gender discrimination”.

The Awards’ host, the irrepressible Ribena Berry, said, “Congratulations JAG! You won an award. However I’m sure you wish there was no reason to have the Aiyoh... Wat Lah?! Awards. Maybe one day.”

Ribena Berry is a fictional character enacted by actor Jo Kukathas.

The End Gender Discrimination Now! contest is organised by Gender at Work, the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), BRIDGE (Institute of Development Studies), and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) Argentina.

Held annually since 2012, the Aiyoh... Wat Lah?! Awards will be held for the third time this year, giving out its own awards, to 2013’s most sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, and transphobic statements and actions.

The Awards recognises public statements and actions as opposed to individuals and institutions. Nominees contend for one of seven categories: “Foot in Mouth”, “Insulting Intelligence”, “Policy Fail”, “Cannot Ignore”, “Least Helpful to the Sisterhood”, “Enough Already!”, and “Right on Track”.

“We had very deserving winners at last year’s Awards,” quipped Ratna Osman of Sisters in Islam (SIS).

“For example, in the Cannot Ignore category, the public voted to give the award to the allegation by High Court judge Zamani Abdul Rahim that women have a tendency to exaggerate about sexual acts.”

The judge reportedly made this allegation when overturning the conviction of a kindergarten operator accused of raping a four-year old child.

“The nominees for the 2014 Awards will be announced sometime in March. Members of the public can vote for their favourite nominees in each of the seven categories,” noted Lee Wei San of the All Women’s Action Society (AWAM). The 2014 Awards will cover public statements and policies made in 2013.

“Unfortunately, 2013 was not short of nominees. We can’t wait for the 2014 Awards.”

The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) comprises:

Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)
All Women's Action Society (AWAM)
Sisters in Islam (SIS)
Women’s Centre for Change, Penang (WCC)
Perak Women for Women Society (PWW)
Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER)
Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor (PSWS)
Sabah Women’s Action Resource Group (SAWO)
Tenaganita

###