



The Inaugural WIR Malaysia Leadership Conference 2019

By Dr Sara Lee Kit Yee

Dr Sara Lee Kit Yee currently serves as a sub-committee member in Mechanical Engineering Technical Division (METD).

The Inaugural WIR Malaysia Leadership Conference 2019 took place on 8th July 2019 at JW Marriot Hotel Kuala Lumpur. This event provides a platform for cultivating business networks, an opportunity to learn about international best practices as well as expose the young for them to consider a future career in the Malaysian rail space. This event is in partnership with YTL group, Mangosteen, P&G, IRSE, Loreal Paris, IEM and mobility.

The event started at 9:30 am with an opening address video from Madame Adeline Ginn, founder of women in rail United Kingdom. This was followed by a welcome speech by Ms Natasha Zulkifli, who is the founder-director of Women in rail (WIR) Malaysia. Ms Natasha Zulkifli is the founder and leader of Women in Rail Malaysia, a not-for-profit organization that was set up in the year 2017 to promote equality and diversity for women in the Malaysian rail industry. This was followed by a keynote addressed by the YB Anthony Loke Siew Fook, minister of transport Malaysia.

The first session entitled “Skills and Strategies to Supercharge your Leadership” invited Y.A.M Tengku Zatashah (Malaysia), Mr. Leon Daniels (London), Ms Ruchi Naithani (India) and Ms Maya Ito (Japan) to discuss about leadership qualities. Mr. Leon Daniels and Ms Maya Ito shared the technology and tendency of women in engineering industry in their respective country. Y.A.M Tengku Zatashah shared on valuable personal experience in leadership qualities, which starts from believing in ourself to the extent of making the changes. Ms Ruchi Naithani further emphasize that leadership qualities could be found in family, where her sister was a leader in their family and influence them.



Sara Lee (Left) with the founder director of WIR Malaysia, Ms. Natasha Zulkifli (Right).

Session 2 discussed “The Efficient Delivery of Major Rail Projects” in Indonesia, China, Singapore, Philippines and Victoria. There are five different speakers from these countries who are Ms Silvia Halim (MRT Jakarta), Ms Dawn Chui (Omnia Services, China), Ms. Shahrin Abdol Salam (SMRT Trains, Singapore), Mr. Juan F. Alfonso (Light Rail Manila Corporation, Philippines) and Ms Cassandra Gash (Rail Project Victoria). They show different challenges and opportunities in the railway industry in their respective country.

After lunch, session 3 continued at 2 pm with the topic of “Pressing for progress by disrupting the ordinary.” There are total of four panels, Ms Sharifah Amirah (London), Mr Colin Lim (Singapore), Ms Nadira Yusoff (Malaysia) and Ms Jennifer Tay (Singapore), who delivered their thoughts on analytical skills in the competitive industry by making a change. They shared their own experience on how to be successful and not afraid of changes.

The last session is on “Perspectives and Priorities: What’s to come for the global rail industry in the next decades.” The four speakers, Ms. Chie Shimizu (Australia), Mr. Mohamed Mezghani (UITP), Mr Torkel Patterson (Japan) and Mr. Neil Robertson (UK) shared their views and future in rail industry in their respective country.

The last closing keynote was addressed by Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, chairman of Air Asia X and the conference officially ends at 5:30 pm.



Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz gave her closing keynote before the conference ends.