



MEDIA STATEMENT

15 September 2011

MOSQUE CONVENTION 2011

Introduction

Muis is organizing Mosque Convention 2011 at the end of this year to discuss key challenges facing the mosque institution and chart the direction of mosques in Singapore for the next five years.

2. Led by mosque leaders and facilitated by Muis, this convention involves some 600 Mosque Management Board (MMB) members, mosque key staff and volunteers who have, since March this year, been actively involved in discussions to assess progress made by mosques since the last convention and identify areas for improvements to bring the mosques to a higher level for greater impact on the community.

3. The convention is scheduled on 4 Dec 2011. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will be the Special Guest and will join mosque leaders for a lunch reception.

Background

4. The last mosque convention was held in 2005¹. Since then, mosques have made significant progress in many areas. Mosques today are observed to be active nodes in the national grid. They contribute to community and social development, are 'friendlier', better governed, more transparent and better resourced with more volunteers as well as staff. Nevertheless, admittedly there are gaps and rooms for improvements.

5. Hence, the upcoming convention aims to address the gaps, by coming up with a plan with strategies and recommendations and building on the collective strengths of the mosques resulting from the previous conventions.

Process

6. The convention has adopted a consultative process involving the entire mosque sector. Since March 2011, numerous discussions were held at various platforms involving MMB members, mosque key staff, mosque religious officers and volunteers. In these discussions, mosque leaders took the lead. The consultation is still on-going. For Mosque Convention 2011,

¹ With the theme "Remodeling Mosques" and having four thrusts "Reshaping Content of Islamic Learning and Social Development", "Restructuring Leadership" and "Reorganizing Systems", it detailed out some 11 strategies and 30 recommendations.

those outside the mosque sector were also involved in the consultation process - young professionals, Singapore migrant Muslims, representatives of Malay/Muslim organisations, youth groups, media and selected individuals. To provide avenue for the community to give inputs, we have created a special email address ourmosque@mosque.sg or masjidkita@mosque.sg.

Theme

7. Many ideas were generated and feedback received from those discussions. They were distilled, analysed and from there, the theme of the convention was crafted - “Enhancing Spirituality, Guiding Community and Changing Lives in an Increasingly Challenging World”. It describes more aptly the basic roles and functions of the mosque. The convention will seek to delve deeper and focus on in its further deliberations and focus group discussions.

8. The theme will be supported by a list of strategies and recommendations which mosque leaders and Muis are presently developing and refining based on the inputs of the discussions. Details of this will be shared nearer the convention.

Supporting events

9. As a lead up to the convention, Muis is facilitating two key events – the inaugural Seminar Muslimah (*Mosque Womens’ Seminar*) and Befrienders’ Seminar.

Seminar Muslimah

In our efforts to bring our mosques to the next level through the mosque convention, we want to recognize the increasing participation and contribution of women in the mosque sector. Their potential should be harnessed. This can be done by tapping on their diverse expertise, dedication and sustained contributions.

Recognizing this, Muis engaged a group of active women mosque volunteers on ways to rejuvenate and harness the potential of the Muslimah Masjid. The idea of a seminar for Muslimah Masjid came from them as they saw this to be an excellent platform to highlight their contributions and at the same time, re-discuss their aspirations and hopes for the mosques and the community as well as the roles of direction of Muslimah Masjid for the next five years.

The seminar is scheduled on Sun, 25 September 2011 at the Orchid Country Club, with the theme “Dynamic Muslimah, Pillar of Strength of Our Mosques”. Some 600 Muslimahs ranging from MMBs, active volunteers and staff are expected to participate. More details will be available in a separate media briefing nearer the date.

Befrienders' Seminar

One of mosques' more transformational contribution is the alleviation of the social challenges facing the needy segment of the community. This is made possible through the introduction of the befrienders' scheme. Started some two years ago, befrienders were recruited, trained, developed and matched to befriend zakat - receiving families and to provide them with moral and psychological support in their journey to be more self-reliant. These befrienders assist mosques, in partnerships with community and national agencies, to provide holistic intervention programmes to the zakat recipient families.

The seminar themed "Touching Hearts, Enriching Lives – Roles of Social Befrienders" (*Menyentuh Hati, Memperkukuh Kehidupan – Peranan Pendamping Kita*), aims to share the best practices of this scheme with some 600 befrienders and mosque leaders, and further motivate them to continue with this noble effort and to inspire more to join the scheme. It is scheduled on 15 Oct 2011. More information on this seminar will be made available nearer the date.

10. The mosque convention comprises the entire process of conceptualization, consultations and townhall meetings. The convention day will mark the end of the consultation process and the beginning of the journey towards implementing these recommendations. Through this Mosque Convention 2011, we hope to further energize the mosque sector to "enhance spirituality, guide our community and change lives".

11. For further information, please contact Assistant Director, Mosque Planning Office, Muis, Mohamad Helmy bin Mohd Isa at helmy@muis.gov.sg or 9062 8792.

15 September 2011

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ANNEX 1

Mosque Convention 2005 – Strategies & Recommendations

