

Speech by Chairman RLAF BOT at RLA Day 2010

Our Guest of Honour, Minister for Finance, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam;
Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs,
Dr Yaacob Ibrahim;
Senior Minister of State, Ministry of National Development & Ministry of Education and MP for
Jurong GRC, Mdm Grace Fu;
Muis President, Hj Mohamed Alami Musa;
Mufti of Singapore, Syed Isa Semait;
Mosque, Community and Faith Leaders;
Our Honoured Guests;

Assalamualaikum and a very good morning to all;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. As you will recall, the Foundation was officially launched by the Prime Minister in 2009, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of Muis and the Opening of the Singapore Islamic Hub. The Foundation is now one year old, but the work of the Foundation, in reflecting the Muslim ethos of Rahmatan Lil Alamin, has been around long before this and predates the official launch of the foundation.

Thanking the Mosque Community

2. Here I must issue a word of thanks to Hj Paiman and the Mosque Committee. The work they have done over the years has been inspirational in reflecting the spirit and ethos of the Rahmatan Lil Alamin, i.e. blessings to all. They have given a platform for the Muslim community to reflect its care and concern for mankind in times of need, and have built up a niche identity for the Rahmatan Lil Alamin brand, i.e. the face of humanitarianism for the Singaporean Muslim Community when there are communities around the world in crisis and in desperate need due to calamities and natural disaster. The Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation will continue to provide this platform for the community.

3. But the Foundation is much more than a mechanism through which the community is able to channel its humanitarian spirit. We are fortunate to have a Board Of Trustees from various segments of the community, as well as the support of Muis in our initial conception. Allow me to explain now the vision of the Board for the Foundation.

Empowering The Community

4. We see the Foundation as a grant making organisation, whose primary role is to empower the community to reflect the ethos of blessings to all. We recognise the strengths of the community, which has thus far been ably channelled by a key community institution, the mosque fraternity, in one niche area, humanitarian aid for crisis-ridden communities. But we see far greater potential for reflecting the RLA spirit and ethos within the community.

Capacity Building

5. With this in mind, we are looking to slowly develop new capabilities within the community, particularly within the youth. By new capabilities, I mean not only the desire but also the capacity to be able to perform not only humanitarian, but also developmental works for needy communities. We are a firm believer in sustainability. We would also like to be able to encourage the manifestation of blessings and compassions across all communities, both as givers and as receivers. We firmly believe the promotion of inter-faith harmony is not only desirable but a necessary component of the ethos of Rahmatan Lil Alamin. Thus we have included these elements as essential criteria into the projects which we are looking to fund.

Developing The Youth

6. We would like to complement existing national schemes and platforms which are already contributing to the ends which we seek to achieve. These include school schemes which encourage the spirit of volunteerism and humanitarianism. I mention schools because we have a vision of a pool of inspired and dedicated youth who are able to mobilise resources such as the foundation, and possess the organisational skills to put together and in carry out meaningful projects to reflect the spirit of blessings to all. In this first year we are starting to have some small successes.

7. We have started to fund some local humanitarian projects where youth are introduced to volunteerism and caring for the less-fortunate in our community, regardless of creed. Later this year we will be supporting a group of students who will be offering their services to a community in China.

8. Ladies and Gentlemen: We have found groups of passionate young ladies and gentlemen in our tertiary institutions such as NTU, SMU and NUS who are well and truly on the path of volunteerism. Also heartwarming is a pool of madrasah students who are also inspired to help others in need. A pool such as this will be the real and most effective way forward in manifesting the ethos of Rahmatan Lil Alamin, and will be the legacy that the foundation hopes to build, insya Allah.