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AT MOSQUE LEADERS INVESTITURE CEREMONY
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Mosques perform a very special function in ensuring that Islam remains close to Muslims. However, our mosques here are more than just places of worship. They spread the true teachings of Islam to our community. They teach Islam to the younger generation to give them the faith, guiding laws and morality. Mosques are beacons of light that illuminate the life of the Muslim community.

2 Our mosques have gone a long way since the early days of Singapore. They are well designed and well built and we can be proud of the well equipped physical infra-structure. Our mosques have many facilities to support its wide range of functions. They are well-governed because we have painstakingly put in place proper systems and processes. And today our mosques run so many programs and diligently make efforts to be attractive to youths, as well as families. They are also recognized as “inclusive” institutions that engage other institutions in the larger community.

3 In short, our mosques had done well. Nevertheless, the fundamental question that I like to ask all of you as our mosque leaders, is: “Are we able to provide that spiritually uplifting experience to Muslims who go to our mosques?”

4 Mosques can have the best of infra-structure, superb governance and fantastic programs. But the impact that such mosques have on the community will be much lesser if they do not succeed to touch the hearts, uplift spirituality and enlighten those who attend them. Furthermore, are our mosques today providing the guidance Muslims need to face in an increasingly challenging life? Are our mosques capable of producing that life-changing effects on those who need to change for the better?

5 Mosque leaders today are mulling over these pertinent questions as they meet to discuss and set the future direction of our mosques for the next five years. In the last 6 months, about 400 mosque leaders frequently met to discuss the answers to these fundamental questions that we posed. By and large, mosque leaders provided affirmative answers to the questions we posed. But mosque leaders agree that much more need to be done for our mosques to create greater spiritual impact on the community. They are now discussing the future direction of our mosques and will present their next 5-Year Plan during the coming Mosque Convention 2011 on 4 December 2011.

6 Mosque Convention 2011 is about strengthening the basics of mosques in Singapore. It will build on the existing strong foundation and will take advantage of all the current strengths that our mosques have developed over all these years. Our mosque leaders are now developing strategies and recommendations. In the next 5 years, they want to further strengthen our mosques to be able to “Enhance the Spirituality, Change Lives and Guide the Community in an Increasingly Challenging World”.

7 Moving on, mosques will therefore have to be more focused on their basic religious functions of enhancing spirituality, touching hearts, changing lives and enlightening human beings. They need to do better in attracting greater participation and attendance of the community so that our mosques really become the centres of Muslim religious life in Singapore. To facilitate them to further strengthen these basic functions, will be the greater role to be played by Enhanced Mosque Clusters (EMC).

8 The Enhanced Mosque Cluster concept which we introduced in 2008 is working very well. It has enabled all mosques, regardless of their size or resources that they have, to function more effectively, share resources, save money yet do more significant programs.

9 For example, mosques work together through the clusters to attract more young people to learn about Islam in mosques. There has been an increase of almost four-fold in the participation of the young in Islamic classes, since the introduction of Enhanced Mosque Clusters.

10 Another example is that our mosques today with the support of the mosque cluster are helping more people in need. The South East, North East and North West Clusters are assisting some 2248 families. Our Mosque Clusters are harnessing community and national resources to help these families.

11 Going forward, we can expect all our mosques to do more for the community through the enhanced mosque cluster model in the coming

years as they implement the recommendations of Mosque Convention 2011.

12 This is because under the enhanced mosque clusters, they will have the flexibility, leeway and means to facilitate all mosques to perform their basic functions in more creative and innovative ways. The Enhanced Mosque Cluster will help and support mosques to attract greater participation in their programs, greater involvement in their affairs and greater attendance of members of the community. Mosque leaders will work together, through the Cluster, to implement selective programs that are more effective to create the difference.

13 Our mosques, working together through the Mosque Cluster model, will endeavour to enhance spirituality, change lives and guide the community in an increasingly challenging world. Mosque Convention 2011 will show the way, InsyaAllah.