

**SPEECH BY MR HAWAZI DAIPI,  
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR MANPOWER,  
AT THE 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY OF MUJAHIDAH LEARNING  
CENTRE, ON 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011, MDIS CAMPUS AUDITORIUM**

Bapak Abdul Wahab Bangkona,  
Director General, Training & Productivity,  
Ministry of Manpower & Transmigration Indonesia.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

2 I am pleased to join you here today in celebration of Mujahidah Learning Centre's 12<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony. When the programme for Indonesian Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) first began in 2005, there were just 35 participants, with only two courses offered - sewing and Quran reading. It has now grown from strength to strength. To date, some 6,000 Indonesian FDWs have graduated from this programme. The courses offered have also increased to 7, including dress making, computer literacy, English proficiency, cake making and hairstyling, to name a few. These work and life skills will stand the participants in good stead during their employment here or when they return home.

3 The Mujahidin Mosque's efforts to run this training programme for FDWs is indeed commendable. The six-month programme not only provides the opportunity for participants to learn new skills and knowledge on weekends, but also allows them to build a social support network during their stay in Singapore. I am told that many employers are supportive of the programme, with some even sending and fetching their FDWs to and from these courses. Some of these enlightened employers are here with us today.

4 The Mujahidah Learning Centre under the Mujahidin Mosque is one of many organisations committed to improving the skills and welfare of FDWs. The Ministry of Manpower also works closely with several non-government and voluntary organizations, such as the Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Skills Training (FAST), to improve the well-being of FDWs while they are working in Singapore. For example, FAST organizes the annual Foreign Domestic Worker Day in December, and also collaborates with partners to bring quality training programmes at highly subsidized rates for FDWs to learn useful skills such as culinary skills and business management. These reiterate that all stakeholders play a part to contribute to FDWs' good working experience in Singapore. I encourage more employers to send their FDWs for training – as this will benefit employers and the FDWs alike.

5 Allow me to cite two examples how the FDWs have benefited from the courses run by the Mujahidin Learning Centre: The first FDW is Mustakiyah Binte Sanusi who has been taking up different courses in the last five years. She has attended the English language course, Cooking and Baking courses. Mustakiyah said she is grateful for the opportunity to acquire new knowledge at Mujahidah Learning Centre. She is currently attending the hairdressing course. She has learnt lots of new hair styles and techniques of hairdressing. She intends to start a small business when she goes back home. She has made many new friends and cherish the opportunity to share experiences and challenges with her friends at the Centre. She thanks Mujahidin Mosque for providing life skill courses for FDW like her to upgrade themselves.

6 Another FDW is Misnatin, who has taken up English language, Computer literacy, Islamic Knowledge (Fardu Ain), Hairdressing and Baking at this centre since 2005. Actually, three years after she started taking up courses here, she left to learn something else at another learning centre for FDWs. She is back at this Mujahidin Learning Centre to take up Cooking. Misnatin appreciates the opportunity to upgrade her competencies at this centre as she said she has acquired so much knowledge and practical skills which she can put to good use when she returns to Indonesia. She is also very happy to attend courses at this centre as she is able to meet her old friend from the same kampung. She says her employer has benefited from her new skills because she applies what she has learned to her job. When she returns home, she intends to open up a bakery. I am glad to learn that FDWs have found the mosque to be a good learning and socialisation centre.

7 The Mujahidah Learning Centre is an example of how mosques in Singapore, under the guidance of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), have remained relevant to meet the needs of the community in this modern and globalized world. Beyond being a place for worship and religious classes, mosques in Singapore also work closely with the community and national agencies to help those in need – the poor, the aged or the young – in their neighbourhood. For example, the mosque partners the Lion Befrienders to provide programmes for senior citizens living in the Stirling Road / Mei Chin area. This is in keeping with the spirit of Rahmatan Lil Alamin or being a blessing to all that mosques in Singapore strive to envision within the community.

8 Mosques in Singapore do not only serve our local Muslim community, but also reach out to migrant workers here. In recent years, we have seen many migrant workers frequenting the mosques for prayers, especially during the fasting month of Ramadhan. Our mosques welcome them, and help them meet their socio-religious needs. As a result, several special Islamic learning programmes and prayers – some in their native language - were introduced at several mosques like Khadijah Mosque in Geylang and En-Naeem Mosque in Hougang. In reciprocation, these migrant workers volunteer their time at the mosques, which have now become an additional and regular platform for them to interact and integrate with the local community.

9 To conclude, let me congratulate the current batch of graduates for their commitment and efforts in upgrading their skills, Mujahidah committee members, dedicated teachers, Mujahidin Mosque Management Board and all those who have supported Mujahidah Learning Centre over the past years.

10 I would also like to express my appreciation to Mr Abdul Wahab Bangkona for his presence here today and the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration for its support of Mujahidah Learning Centre.

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