

**SPEECH BY CE MUIS
AT THE MUIS AWARDS AND
PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE CHEQUE PRESENTATION CEREMONY 2015
SATURDAY, 8 OCT 2016
ISTANA**

His Excellency, President Tony Tan Keng Yam & Mrs Tan

Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information, Minister in charge of Cyber Security and Minister in Charge of Muslim Affairs

Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corp

President of Muis, Hj Mohd Alami Musa,

Sohibus Samahah, Dr Fatris Bakaram, Mufti of the Republic of Singapore

Distinguished members of the Muis Council

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum wr wb and a very good afternoon to all

Allow me to begin my speech in Malay.

Selamat datang ke Majlis Anugerah Muis serta Majlis Penyampaian Cek kepada Dana Cabaran Presiden. Pertama sekali, saya ingin merakamkan setinggi-tinggi penghargaan di atas kehadiran Tetamu Terhormat kita, Presiden Tony Tan Keng Yam, kerana menyerikan majlis hari ini, bersama dengan Mrs Tan. Ini adalah kali yang kedua Majlis Anugerah Muis diadakan di Istana. Kami bersyukur di atas penghormatan ini.

2. Tahun lalu, Singapura telah menyambut ulang tahunnya yang ke 50. Dalam meraikan kejayaan yang dikecapi, kita juga telah mengiktiraf sumbangan jasa para perintis Singapura yang membangunkan negara. Sudah menjadi tanggungjawab kita untuk terus menghidupkan warisan perintis kita agar Singapura kekal makmur dan progresif dan rakyatnya yang berbilang agama, terus hidup dalam suasana harmoni.

3. Sebagaimana kita memperingati sumbangan para perintis, begitu juga kita mengiktiraf peranan relawan membina masyarakat dan memperkukuh institusi sosio-agama kita. Muis memulakan tradisi meraikan sumbangan bakti tenaga relawan semenjak tahun 1990. Sebentar lagi lapan individu akan dikurniakan Anugerah Jasa Bakti dan Jasa Cemerlang Muis. Seperti 101 relawan yang sebelum ini telah dihargai kerana menabur bakti secara cemerlang untuk sekian lama, mereka insan-insan mithali yang menjadi contoh tauladan kepada kita semua. Semoga segala amal jariah dan pengorbanan mereka diberkati Allah (swt), Amin.

4. Di samping itu, pada majlis anugerah ini, kami juga akan menyerahkan cek hasil sumbangan masyarakat Islam Singapura kepada Dana Cabaran Presiden. Dana Cabaran Presiden bertujuan mendukung usaha badan-badan kebajikan setempat dan menyinari hidup golongan yang memerlukan, tidak kira bangsa atau agama. Ini merupakan tahun ke-14 masyarakat Islam Singapura menyokong Cabaran Presiden. Sumbangan ini, merupakan manifestasi nilai masyarakat Islam sebagai Rahmatan Lil Alamin, yak itu masyarakat penyebar rahmat untuk semua.

Kini izinkan saya melanjutkan ucapan saya dalam bahasa Inggeris.

Ladies & Gentlemen

1. Allow me to thank his Excellency, President Tony Tan Keng Yam and Mrs Tan who have graciously agreed to grace the Muis Awards Ceremony at the Istana for the second time. This is indeed a great honour for the Malay/Muslim Community.

Keeping the Singapore Spirit Alive

2. Last year, as a young nation, Singapore celebrated its Golden Jubilee. As a community, we also reflected on our past challenges and achievements, and remembered and honoured the sacrifices and contributions of our pioneers. This legacy continues today as can be seen with so many individuals present today, who are actively volunteering in our socio-religious institutions such as our mosques. They not only serve the community but also promote social harmony through being actively involved in reaching out to all segments of society. We must continue to inspire the community to contribute and to perform more acts of voluntarism that benefit all.

3. The Muis Awards is a tradition very much in keeping with this aspiration that is to inspire the community to contribute. The Awards were given out, starting 1990, to honour the dedication and contributions of volunteers who enrich and support the work of Muis and its key institutions in serving our community's socio religious needs and beyond. Today, we gather to honour eight volunteers who will be conferred the Muis Awards 2016. They join the ranks of 101 distinguished recipients of the Muis Jasa Cemerlang and Muis Jasa Bakti Awards over the past 26 years. They also represent the countless individuals who have volunteered their time, energy and services to move the community forward.

Spirit of Giving in the Community

4. The spirit of *gotong royong* is the Community's kindred spirit which has enabled Muis to do a lot more to serve the community. I'm also heartened to report that the community has rallied together and supported the latest increase in contributions to the Mosque Building and Mendaki Fund (MBMF). The sense of deep community ownership of our mosques and religious institutions has seen community collectively contributing to the Mosque Building Fund, enabling us to build 25 modern, well-equipped and multi-

functional mosques in the HDB heartlands. For instance, the Muslim community in Jurong has benefitted from the opening of Masjid Maarof in Jurong West in August this year. Masjid Yusof Ishak is slated to be ready by early of 2017. Our community's generous contributions have also enabled many of our older mosques to be upgraded and rejuvenated.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. We have also seen a sustained increase in zakat paid to Muis every year. This community support has enabled Muis to do more through zakat assistance and empowerment schemes to the poor and needy. More families in need have received assistance and total zakat disbursement has reached \$35 million in 2015.

6. Zakat also serves six other beneficiaries besides the poor and needy, and thus also provides valuable resources for many other functions that Muis has to perform as well as development programmes that Muis can offer to the different deserving segments of the community. For example, Muis facilitates the development of religious education in Singapore as well as development of religious teachers and educators through many programmes made possible through the generous zakat contributions made to Muis.

Spirit of Volunteerism

7. Ladies and gentlemen, aside from the generosity of donations and financial contributions, our community's strength goes beyond what can be measured by dollars and cents. Our strength, like Singapore, lies in our people.

8. The eight individuals whom we honour today have served the community in our beloved socio-religious institutions, such as the mosques, as well as our partner organisations, that further the welfare and well-being of the Muslim community. Many of the awards recipients today are also serving beyond the Malay/Muslim organisations, such as being members of the Inter Racial and Religious Confidence Circles and also important Committees at the National level.

9. Five of the eight individuals we honour today have spent years tirelessly serving in the socio-religious sector. They have lent their time and energy to help the mosques run various programmes for many sectors of the congregation. Some have developed youth centric programmes to better engage and mentor the young. Some worked hard to raise funds for mosque upgrading while others have worked to build social trust and foster strong bonds with our neighbours, as well as our various faith and ethnic communities in Singapore.

10. Our volunteers are not just willing to serve, but they also guide and pass the baton onto the next generation. What is indeed most heart-warming is the increasing number of women and young taking up leadership positions in our mosques. These positive energies would need to be continuously harnessed as the mosque sector begins charting its strategic direction for the future in the upcoming Mosque Convention to be held in 2017.

17. Having said that, the extraordinary volunteers we laud at the Muis Awards do not serve only the mosque sector. Today we honour our Anugerah Jasa Cemerlang recipient, Hj Latiff Ibrahim, for his contributions in the fields of law, arbitration, social entrepreneurship as well as championing opportunities for disadvantaged youth. His

contribution to the Appeal Board – which hears appeals from parties aggrieved with the decisions of the Syariah Court and Registry of Muslim Marriages - has stretched more than two decades, his astute and firm judgments have contributed immensely to the development of the Islamic family law in Singapore. He also sits on the Board of Warees Investments, where, through his guidance and far-sightedness, notable sustainable wakaf developments such as the Red House project have been successfully completed. Being deeply passionate in giving back to the community, he also took on the additional challenge to be the Chairman of Warees Halal in 2009. Under his leadership and guidance, Warees Halal today has been further strengthened as it supports Muis' Halal Certification function and audits. He is also a firm believer in helping the underprivileged youth from challenged backgrounds.

Building the next Generation of Volunteers

Ladies and gentlemen

11. As we honour our volunteers, it is important that we put in place efforts to build a pool of new generation of volunteers. This has been part of the work of the Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation (RLAF). We know RLAF for its work in mobilising the generosity of the Singaporean Muslim community. RLA had disbursed more than five million dollars raised from the community, for humanitarian disaster relief all over the world. But what is perhaps less known is, how the Foundation has disbursed grants to youth groups as part of its mission to build capacity within the community to promote the culture of volunteerism and nurture the ethos of Rahmatan Lil Alamin. In 2015 alone, the Foundation approved \$281,000 in support of 16 local and regional projects by youth

groups, for humanitarian and community service work in countries such as Myanmar, Indonesia, China and Turkey.

12. The Foundation has indeed grown from strength to strength since its launch by Prime Minister in 2009. In a recent Public Perception Survey conducted by the community, 96% of the community stands ready to help whoever is in need, regardless of race or religion. 98% is ready to contribute to the well-being of the country. This is indeed a manifestation of the deep set values which form the core of the Singapore Muslim Identity, ever willing to strengthen the community as well as to contribute to the nation.

13. As a further manifestation of this, today, we are also witnessing the handing over of a cheque for the amount of \$100,000 for the President's Challenge, yet another projection of the community's blessings to all ethos.

Ladies and Gentlemen

18. In closing, as I have mentioned, the Muis Awards is a manifestation of the symbiosis between the community and Muis. It is our humble way to honour and express our gratitude to you, our tireless volunteers, and also to the whole community for the strong support to Muis all these years. We are thankful to the community and look forward to its continued support and forging more partnerships in meeting and delivering our services to the community.

19. And finally, before I end, let me once again congratulate our Muis Award winners. They have led the way and are indeed shining role models to us all. Thank you.