

**SPEECH BY HAJI ABDUL RAZAK MARICAR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF MUIS,
AT THE MUIS WAKAF DISBURSEMENT CEREMONY 2017
THURSDAY, 25 MAY 2017 AT AL-ANSAR MOSQUE**

Sohibus Samaha Mufti of Singapore, Dr Mohamed Fatris Bakaram

Members of the Muis Council

Members of the Muis Wakaf Disbursement Committee

Board Members of Warees Investments Pte Ltd

Trustees, Mutawallis dan Beneficiaries of Wakaf

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

1 Alhamdulillah, today we will be witnessing the annual disbursement of income from wakaf properties for the financial year ending 2016. I am pleased to announce that Muis is disbursing more than \$3.1 million to various beneficiaries including mosques, madrasahs and Muslim organisations. This is an increase of 3% compared to last year.

2 About \$1.5 million will be channelled to 27 mosques in Singapore to help in funding mosque upgrading projects, programmes and daily operations. Amongst those assisted by Wakaf are mosques that are undergoing renovation and upgrading works such as Masjid Darul Ghufuran which will be receiving close to \$50,000 to upgrade their current premises to house more than 5,000 congregants. Other mosques to benefit from the disbursement include Wak Tanjong, Hasanah and

Malabar mosques. The Wakaf funds also assist smaller mosques such as Masjid Pusara Aman that rely mostly on Friday collections for their daily operations.

3 I am also pleased to inform that our six full-time madrasahs and the part-time mosque madrasahs will be receiving more than \$390,000 this year. The disbursements will allow the madrasahs to upgrade their facilities, so as to provide more conducive environments for the development of our future asatizah. For example, Madrasah Al-Arabiah Al-Islamiah will be receiving \$75,000 this year to support the construction of its new campus which is scheduled for completion by 2019.

4 Muis will be disbursing close to \$321,000 to 29 Muslim and voluntary welfare organisations this year to help support their programmes aimed at enhancing socio-religious life of different facets within the Muslim community. These include welfare homes run by Jamiyah, Pertapis and Muhammadiyah Welfare Home, youth-focused organisations including Youth-In.C, Malay Youth Literary Association or 4PM and other organization such as Ain Society and Tenkasi Muslim Welfare Society. With today's disbursements from wakaf, I am confident that it will help strengthen the quality and sustainability of these organisations' programmes, thus delivering better outcomes and services for the community, Insya Allah.

5 The increase in Wakaf disbursement that we have achieved today is largely due to higher income growth last year. Muis, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Warees Investments Pte Ltd, adopts a proactive and market-driven approach to improve the performance of Wakaf properties and ensure good returns to the Wakaf. This is very important, so that beneficiaries continue to enjoy good disbursements

despite the weak commercial properties market. We continue to attract good businesses operating in wakaf properties by keeping rental competitive and providing affordable costs of maintenance, reducing time taken to occupy vacant premises, conducting a regular maintenance regime and managing customer complaints.

Sustaining Wakaf in Singapore

Maximising Returns for Wakaf Beneficiaries

6 We are always on the lookout how we can maximize returns for our wakaf beneficiaries. Towards this end, this year, Muis together with Warees will be embarking on a Wakaf Improvement Initiative to carry out more upgrading works to improve the condition of our Wakaf properties, which predominantly comprise conserved pre-war shop-houses. The improvement programme will ensure that wakaf properties remain safe and are able to attract quality tenants, thereby maximising returns for the beneficiaries. For example, Wisma Indah located at Changi Road will be undergoing major air-conditioning system replacement works. This is to ensure that the building remains conducive for the asatizah, students, tenants and general public to work, study and shop at the premises. For several other properties, painting, roof repair and window replacement works will be carried out as part of the Wakaf Improvement Initiative.

Strengthening Wakaf Governance

7 As the Wakaf authority in Singapore, Muis strives to strengthen governance for long-term sustainability and for the best interest of wakaf. Last year, Muis established the Wakaf Dispute Resolution Framework to assist mutawallis to resolve conflicts through a mediation and inquiry process, conducted by a professional and specialised Committee whose members are made up of experts with legal and syariah backgrounds. Through this framework, we aim for wakaf disputes to be resolved amicably and without incurring the high costs of legal proceedings. Importantly, this ensures that the returns to wakaf beneficiaries will not be compromised amidst some of these internal disputes.

8 As all of you are aware, there have been several rounds of public consultation sessions on the proposed amendments to the Administration of Muslim Law Act or AMLA. Several of you showed strong support for the move to require a separate sinking fund on wakafs for the proper upkeep and maintenance of related wakaf properties. Others were also appreciative on the greater clarity on mutawalli and trustee appointments. I wish to thank you for your feedback. I have no doubt that the amendments if passed would further help to strengthen the administration of our wakafs, Insha Allah.

Conclusion

9 Ladies and gentlemen, today's disbursement and this blessing is made possible by Allah's grace and benevolence as well as the foresight of philanthropists who

created wakaf as instruments to provide for the needs of our Muslim community. We are glad that mutawallis, many of whom are family members of the wakif, are also doing their part to ensure that the wakaf managed by them comply with Muis' requirements and bring the best returns for our community. For example, the Aljunied Kampong Glam Burial Ground Trust has been disbursing to Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah for its operations whilst the MSE Angullia Wakaf has been donating part of their wakaf income since 2003 to support the Singapore Haj operations and to provide medicines and sundries for the pilgrims. Muis would like to thank the mutawallis for the support and tireless contributions towards improving the socio-religious life of Singapore Muslims. May Allah grant all of you with the best of all rewards.

10 For the benefit of our Malay speaking guests, allow me to summarise my speech in Malay.

11 Hari ini kita akan menyaksikan pengagihan pendapatan wakaf sebanyak tiga perpuluhan satu juta (\$3.1j). Ini merupakan penambahan sebanyak 3 peratus jika dibandingkan dengan tahun lalu. Dua puluh tujuh (27) masjid, enam (6) madrasah sepenuh masa dan dua puluh sembilan (29) organisasi dan badan kebajikan Islam akan mendapat manfaat daripada pulangan hasil wakaf tahun ini.

12 Antara faktor yang menyumbang kepada kenaikan jumlah agihan ialah bertambahnya pulangan sewa walaupun dalam ekonomi yang tidak menentu ini. Muis, melalui anak syarikat kami, Warees Investments Pte Ltd, telah berusaha gigih sejak tahun lalu untuk menarik penyewa yang mampu membayar sewa setaraf dengan

harga pasaran dan memastikan pembayaran pada masa yang ditetapkan. Tahun ini, Muis dan Warees akan melaksanakan inisiatif pembaikan bangunan-bangunan wakaf agar ia sentiasa berada dalam keadaan selamat, selesa dan setaraf dengan bangunan komersial yang lain. Kami berharap program ini akan terus menjana pulangan yang lumayan untuk masyarakat Islam di Singapura, Insya Allah.

13 Muis berusaha untuk memastikan bahawa sektor Wakaf ditadbir dengan baik demi kemampanan jangka panjang. Muis telah munubuhkan suatu rangka kerja penyelesaian pertikaian. Ini membolehkan konflik antara mutawalli dileraikan melalui proses pengantaraan (“mediation”) dan pertanyaan (“inquiry”) oleh jawatankuasa penyelesaian pertikaian wakaf yang dilantik oleh Muis dan merangkumi pakar-pakar dalam bidang perundangan dan syariah. Dengan adanya rangka kerja ini, mutawalli tidak perlu menjalani prosiding mahkamah yang memakan kos yang tinggi. Langkah ini memastikan bahawa pulangan kepada penerima agihan wakaf tidak terjejas ekoran konflik antara mutawalli.

14 Seperti yang anda maklumi, beberapa sesi konsultasi untuk mengemaskini Akta Pentadbiran Hukum Islam atau AMLA telah dijalankan. Ada di kalangan anda telah memberi maklum balas mengenai usulan untuk membenarkan para mutawalli mengeneipkan sebahagian daripada keuntungan bersih wakaf bagi tujuan penyelenggaraan dan peningkatan bangunan. Anda juga telah memberi pandangan mengenai usulan untuk memperkemas undang-undang mengenai pelantikan mutawalli. Saya ingin ucapkan ribuan terima kasih atas maklum balas anda. Sekiranya cadangan-cadangan untuk mengemaskini AMLA diluluskan, saya pasti ia akan mengukuhkan lagi pentadbiran wakaf di Singapura, Insha Allah.

15 Izinkan saya akhiri dengan serangkap pantun:

Baik iktikaf daripada bersembang

Tingkatkan ibadat ilmupun teguh

Institusi wakaf perlu dikembangkan

Fabrik masyarakat bertambah kukuh

Tanam selasih di pinggir halaman

Bila berbunga dapat hasilnya

Terima kasih pengamanah sekalian

Jasamu mulia di sisi agama

16 Saya akhiri dengan ucapan selamat menjalankan ibadat puasa dan semoga amalan amalan kita di bulan yang mulia ini di rahmati Allah swt. Wabillahi taufiq walhidayah wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.
