

**SPEECH BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF MUIS HJ ABDUL RAZAK MARICAR
AT THE MOSQUE INVESTITURE CEREMONY HELD AT THE SINGAPORE
ISLAMIC HUB AUDITORIUM ON SATURDAY, 29 APRIL 2017**

Sohibusamahah Mufti, Dr Mohamed Fatris Bakaram

Muis Council Members, Mosque Veteran Leaders

Mosque Management Boards

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum Wr Wb

Let me start my speech by taking this opportunity to congratulate Cikgu Hj Md Ayub Johari and his MMB members for the successful completion and opening of our 71st mosque, Masjid Yusof Ishak. Alhamdulillah, it was a very special occasion for our community as the opening was graced by Puan Noor Aishah, the wife of Allahyarham Encik Yusof Ishak, Singapore's first President, and in the presence of our special guest, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. I understand that the 3 day -programmes and events that were rolled out subsequently to introduce the mosque to the community and beyond, were well attended by Muslim community from various parts of the island, representatives from various grassroots organisations, schools and also many from our other faith communities. Congratulations, Hj Ayub and team for all your hard work and may Allah swt bless all of you.

2 Alhamdulillah, today 112 volunteers from 11 mosques of the Central North Mosque Cluster will receive their appointment letters as members of the Mosque Management Boards. I would like to express my appreciation to all of you who have come forward to volunteer your services as Mosque Management Board Members. You will join 681 other members of the Mosque Management Boards who are serving selflessly in the remaining 60 mosques.

3. While we are building more mosques and upgrading existing mosques to benefit the community, it is actually the mosque leaders like all of you, staff and volunteers in our mosques who make our mosques transformational touch-points for our community. You

are the pillars of our mosques and you play an important role to make our mosques vibrant centres for socio-religious life in the community.

Building our Human capital capabilities

4 It is for this reason that Muis has been investing heavily in developing the capabilities of our mosques leaders, volunteers and officers. This is to ensure that all our mosque staff and volunteers are equipped with the skills and competencies needed to work effectively with our community. Beyond skills and competencies our mosque leaders must also engage and position our mosques as local nodes in the national grid and harness the mosque potential to contribute towards social cohesion and strengthening our social fabric. Mosques should look into networking with other grassroots and community agencies and ensuring that our community do take advantage of events, campaigns, talks, health screening that brings benefit to the entire local community in the neighbourhood.

5 Under our Muis' Mosque Capabilities Development Framework, all of you will be required to undergo the Administration of Mosque and Leadership Programme, or, in short, AMAL, to be equipped with the skills and knowledge for you to perform your responsibilities and to work as a team, as Mosque Management Board members. I understand in 2016, two batches totalling 100 mosque leaders from SEMC and NEMC completed their AMAL training, Alhamdulillah. I understand some of you who are appointed today have attended the training last week. The rest of you I understand, will also be attending it soon.

Mosque Officers Development Scheme (MODS) – Graduation

6. Today we will also witness the graduation of 58 mosque officers who participated in a 100-hour highly intensive training programme leading to the Certificate in Mosque Management (CMM). The training covers Mosque Management and Governance, Interpersonal Skills and Project management Skills. This graduation is for two batches, 9 and 10. All in all, 10 batches of 275 mosque officers have graduated since the Mosque Officers Development Scheme was first introduced in 2013. Since then, Muis has seen a significant increase in the quality of programmes developed by our officers. More

importantly, there has been better synergy and collaboration between the various officers and mosques. Almost \$300,000 have been invested by Muis in this training scheme so far. Insya Allah, we hope to have two more runs of MODS by end of the year.

Dear Mosque Leaders,

7 We have developed and implemented many key strategies in the past 2 mosque conventions – Mosque Convention 2005 and 2011. The objective is to empower mosques to better serve the community. One of the strategies that has generated immense benefits is the implementation of the Enhanced Mosque Cluster.

8 Moving forward, the next phase will be to have all our 71 mosques think and move as a sector. Some key strategic questions are: Can our mosques work more closely for common growth and sustainability especially in the areas of human capital development, development and management of key programmes, as well as long-term financial sustainability? Can there be more pooling of resources and deployment of integrated and resilient systems to serve the community more effectively? Can there be a worthwhile project where several of our key mosques can come together to run social services needed by our society, leveraging on the collective strength that we have built over the years, to contribute beyond our own community, for the betterment of our society. These are some of the ideas that we can think of as a lead up to our upcoming mosque convention where we will chart the next phase of growth of our mosque sector.

9 The critical success factor of any successful organisation which include our mosque is leadership. We hope to develop more collaborative leaders who are spiritualised and able to create the spirit of community conscientiousness.

11 As we look towards a more exciting phase of our mosque development through the Mosque Convention, we must continue to ensure that our mosques programmes such ADIL, aLIVE remain relevant, contemporary and contextualised. We also must ensure that our teaching staff, including our asatizah who deliver our Islamic Learning programmes in our mosques are also competent and qualified.

Mandatory Asatizah Recognition Scheme (MARS)

12 I am happy to note that since the introduction of the Mandatory Asatizah Recognition Scheme our asatizah serving in our mosques such as the MROs, ADIL Murabbi, aLIVE teachers as well as asatizahs who deliver daily kuliahs at our mosques are all not only ARS certified but have also been attending Continuous Professional Education (CPE) courses for their development and growth. Our asatizahs have been attending such programmes for several years and have reaped the benefits of continuous upgrading in teaching Islam to the community. They have given their support to the ARS because the scheme contributes to their professionalism as religious teachers. Currently, there are 2579 asatizahs who are registered in the ARS.

13 It is also heartening to note that many of our asatizahs, including our MROs, have continued to upgrade themselves by obtaining post-graduate qualifications in relevant areas of studies. For example, Ust Md Qushairy Bin Md Thaha, the current Head of Darul Quran at Kg Siglap Mosque completed his Masters in Al-Quran and Sunnah from UKM in 2015, and Ust Nuzul Qadar Bin Abdullah, a recipient of Muis Post-graduate Scholarship attained Masters in Hadith from Jordan University in 2016. Although Ust Nuzul is now in Muis Academy as a Programme Consultant, he still teaches weekly at Kg Siglap and Darul Ghufran Mosques in Tafseer and Hadith, respectively. I am also glad to note that one of our mosque leaders, Ust Suhaimi Mustar has been conferred a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by University Technology of Malaysia (UTM) in 2016. Several other MROs are still pursuing post-graduates studies. This endeavour to pursue knowledge among our mosque leaders and MROs will only uplift the level of religious discourse and bring more benefit in shaping the religious life of our community, Insya Allah.

SERVICE EXCELENCE ETHOS AT OUR MOSQUES

Dear Mosque Leaders

14 As MMB members you should endeavour to serve to the best of your ability to your mosque Jemaah or congregant. In the present environment, it is very easy for anyone to post their experiences on social media. Our mosques, being a public space, will be

opened to any form of scrutiny or feedback, either positive or otherwise from the congregants.

15 Sometimes in our zeal and effort to deliver our services, whether unknowingly or otherwise, some mosque leaders, staff or even volunteers may be seen as “abrasive and insensitive”. I would like to urge our mosques leaders to focus on excellent service delivery as we embark in our journey to be transformational touch-points to our community.

16 I am heartened to hear that some of our mosques are already making headway in this effort. For example the mosques in the South West Mosque Cluster have already started their Bakti programme to imbue and promote service excellence among its staff and leaders. The programme gives significant emphasis to the roles of the frontline officers such as the Customer Service Officers (CSOs) and Nojas. Similarly Mujahidin Mosque have also instilled the use of **5S – Salam, Senyum, Sapa, Sopan and Santun** as part of their service excellence effort. I hope this can be modelled by other mosques. I know it is, at times, hard to please the ever insatiable needs and demands of the public, but I believe we can serve the community better if we place our Jemaah/community at the “core or heart” of our service, Insya Allah.

Conclusion

17 As many of you would bear witness, serving at the mosques can be challenging at times given the increasing demand and expectation of our community. But I believe Allah has chosen those who are capable to serve. As mentioned in the final ayah of Surah Al-Baqarah:

“.. Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability...”

18 I am truly grateful that you have come forward to join in this ever-challenging journey to serve the community. Hence let me again express my heartiest congratulations and my heartfelt thanks to you, our dear mosque leaders for your tireless contributions and for sharing our vision to make our mosques transformational touch-points for our community. Also, my congratulations to the mosque staff who will be receiving their Certificate of Achievement for the Certificate in Mosque Management.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me now to say a few words in Malay.

Sidang pemimpin masjid sekalian,

1. Sebentar lagi kita akan menyaksikan perantikan seramai 112 relawan yang bakal memimpin 11 buah masjid di Kelompok Tengah (Utara) sebagai anggota Lembaga Pentadbir Masjid (LPM). Saya ingin ucapkan tahniah kepada semua yang tampil secara rela hati berkhidmat kepada masyarakat Islam Singapura selama tempoh tiga tahun yang akan datang. Ia suatu tanggungjawab yang besar dan mulia. Dan anda semua telah memberikan komitmen untuk memikul tanggungjawab tersebut sekaligus memakmurkan Rumah Allah.

2. Hari ini juga seramai 58 pegawai masjid akan menerima sijil tamat kursus Sijil Pengurusan Masjid yang dibangun dalam rangkakerja Skim Pembangunan Pegawai-Pegawai Masjid (atau MODS). Alhamdulillah, sejak kursus ini bermula pada 2013, seramai 275 pegawai dalam 10 kumpulan telah dilatih. Kami lihat lebih banyak program masjid yang bermutu hasil dari kerjasama atau kolaborasi antara masjid dalam kelompok yang sama ataupun silang kelompok, Alhamdulillah.

Sidang hadirin,

3. Program MODS ini merupakan sebahagian dari usaha Muis untuk mempertingkatkan kemahiran warga masjid. Tumpuan ini akan diteruskan di tahun-tahun akan datang. Bagi Konvensyen Masjid 2018, kami perlu berbincang dan melakar gagasan-gagasan demi terus membawa masyarakat maju ke hadapan di tengah-tengah cabaran yang kompleks lagi genting.

4. Untuk ini, kita perlukan kepimpinan masjid yang penuh berwawasan dan berwibawa. Kita bakal melihat masjid yang bukan sahaja bergerak sebagai sebuah kelompok, malah sebuah sektor. Untuk ini kita pasti akan membentuk masjid yang ramah mesra bekerjasama dan bergotong royong dengan masyarakat dan juga rakan-rakan kerja seperti badan akar umbi, pertubuhan kebajikan serta kumpulan belia. Begitulah sedikit bayangan tentang apa yang kita mungkin bincangkan di MC18 kelak.

Sidang Hadirin,

5. Dalam kita bersemangat menjalankan usaha untuk menarik jemaah, adalah penting kita memastikan kita dapat lakukan dengan penuh hemah. Kita harus mengambil kira sensitiviti serta keperluan jemaah. Dengan adanya teknologi media sosial yang canggih kini, amat mudah bagi para pengunjung serta jemaah memuat naik pengalaman mereka di masjid; samada baik atau sebaliknya. Maka dengan itu, saya amat berharap agar para pemimpin serta pegawai masjid mempamerkan khidmat cemerlang apabila menyantuni para jemaah dan pengunjung masjid dengan baik. Permintaan yang sekecil-manapun harus dilayani dengan baik. Khidmat cemerlang perlu dijadikan etos atau nilai murni bagi para pegawai masjid kita.

6. Izinkan saya kini menyebut sedikit tentang suatu perkara yang amat penting di masa kini. Baru-baru ini Muis telah menyemak dan memperhalusi Skim Pengiktirafan Asatizah (ARS). Bermula 1 Jan 2017 ini, skim ini telah dijadikan mandatori kepada semua asatizah yang mengajar di Singapura, termasuk di masjid-masjid kita. Ini termasuk kuliah harian, aLIVE, ADIL dan sebagainya. Saya berharap para pemimpin masjid serta asatizah dapat bekerjasama dalam isu ini bagi memastikan jemaah serta anak-anak kita mendapat ilmu yang tepat dan sesuai dengan konteks masa kini. Setakat ini seramai 2579 asatizah telah berdaftar dengan ARS. Ini termasuk mereka yang berkhidmat dengan masjid kita sebagai MRO, tenaga pengajar aLIVE dan sebagainya.

7. Akhir sekali saya menyeru kepada semua terus berkhidmat dengan penuh kesungguhan serta iltizam yang tinggi serta semangat ikhlas demi menjadikan masjid sebagai pusat khidmat dan rujukan untuk masyarakat Islam khususnya and masyarakat Singapura, umumnya. Memang tugas menguruskan masjid bukanlah sesuatu yang mudah. Namun saya yakin Allah SWT telah memilih anda yang mampu menggalas tugas ini. Seperti firmanNya dalam Surah Al-Baqarah:

“Allah tidak akan membebankan seseorang melainkan apa yang terdaya olehnya...”

Saya yakin kita mampu melakukannya, Insya Allah!

Wabillahitaufiq Walhidayah, Wassalamualaikm Wr Wbt.