

**SPEECH BY MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION AND  
MINISTER-IN-CHARGE OF MUSLIM AFFAIRS, DR YAACOB IBRAHIM, AT THE  
SINGAPORE MUSLIM TENKASI WELFARE SOCIETY 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
DINNER AT ULU PANDAN COMMUNITY CLUB ON 7 FEB 2015**

Hj Hassan Kuttus

President, Singapore Tenkasi Muslim Welfare Society

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

1. Assalamualaikum Wr Wb. A very good evening to all of you.
2. I am happy to be here for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Singapore Tenkasi Muslim Welfare Society.
3. The Society has had a long, rich history of service to the community and to Singapore. The Society, which was formed in 1940, started out with the aim of looking after the social, economic and cultural needs of Tamil-speaking Muslims who had come to Singapore from Tenkasi in southern Tamil Nadu.
4. In the years since then, the Society – or more affectionately known as Tenkasi – has grown from strength to strength. It became a founding member of the Federation of Indian Muslims and is one of the active Indian Muslim Organisations (IMOs) today. Tenkasi today offers a broad range of programmes and services to serve not only the descendents of those who had come from Tenkasi village, but also the wider Muslim community, and indeed also the whole nation.

### **Ethos of Rahmatan Lil Alamin**

5. For its spirit of service, I would like to commend Tenkasi for projecting the ethos of Rahmatan Lil Alamin, or blessings to all. One of Tenkasi's noteworthy contributions is the Waterfalls Student Care Centre, which provides before- and after-school programmes for children, regardless of race and religion. Indeed, the Waterfalls Student Care Centre is the fruit of collaboration between Tenkasi, Leng Kee Community Centre and Central Singapore Community Development Council. Tenkasi has also been working closely with other agencies such as MUIS, SINDA and Yayasan MENDAKI. Tenkasi's Student Care Centre therefore exemplifies the important role that Indian Muslim organisations play in bringing about a caring and cohesive society in Singapore. I am happy that Tenkasi takes care of not just its own community, but also looks after other communities.

### **Care for the Needy**

6. Apart from the welfare of children, Tenkasi has always placed emphasis on providing support for disadvantaged families. Tenkasi is committed to do its part to support and complement what the government is doing to care for the needy. Tenkasi is one of the four Indian Muslim Organisations that receives MUIS' Annual Grant for Social Service, which helps to support developmental and empowerment programmes to strengthen disadvantaged Muslim families.

7. Based on MUIS' 2014 data for zakat assistance, 649 Indian Muslim families received zakat assistance. Last year, MUIS reviewed the

qualifying criteria so that even more deserving families can benefit from zakat assistance. I hope that our community can continue to rally together to help care for and support the needy.

### **Commitment to Islamic Education**

8. I am heartened that the Indian Muslim community is committed to ensure that our children receive proper religious education in this increasingly globalised and complex world. To this end, it is important that our religious teachers are well-qualified and possess the right knowledge and attitude. Today, we have 198 Indian Muslim asatizah recognised under MUIS' Asatizah Recognition Scheme. Our Indian Muslim Imams are also having regular engagement sessions with the Mufti, contributing to Friday sermons, as well as creating more touch points to reach out to and engage Indian Muslim youth.

9. The close partnership between our Indian Muslim organisations and MUIS has also made it possible to cater to the growing demand for Islamic education in the Indian Muslim community. Various financial assistance subsidies are available for needy students, to ensure that every Muslim child can receive an Islamic education.

10. Besides Tamil weekend madrasah classes conducted in our seven mosques, more than 3,000 Indian Muslim students now attend such classes organised by Indian Muslim organisations in our heartland mosques. Tenkasi alone offers classes in five mosques. On top of these, students can also choose to enrol in the aLIVE programme or classes offered by the private Islamic education sector.

## **Conclusion**

11. We should all take pride in and preserve our rich culture and heritage, so that our young will want to emulate the example of the pioneers in nation-building. We should continue to strengthen our strong foundation and institutions, by putting our hearts, minds and hands together to help one another in the community, and also to give back to society as a whole.

12. Once again, my warmest congratulations to Tenkasi for its good work. I hope Tenkasi will continue to do its best for its members, for the community, and for Singapore. The government will continue to do our part to support the development of the Indian Muslim community. With 75 years in its history book, I hope Tenkasi will continue its good work, and celebrate many, many more such anniversaries to come.

13. On this joyous occasion, let us also reflect on the way forward for Tenkasi and the community, as we celebrate Singapore's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. I look forward to ideas from the Indian Muslim community on how we can join hands with other communities to contribute to a better Singapore.

14. Wabillahitaufig Wal Hidayah, Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

15. Thank you.