

WELCOME REMARKS
BY
MDM ZURAIDAH ABDULLAH,
CHAIRMAN, MALAY HERITAGE FOUNDATION
AT THE
REOPENING OF THE MALAY HERITAGE CENTRE (MHC)
ON
SATURDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2012, 10.00 AM

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong,

Dr Yaacob Ibrahim,
Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts and
Minister-In-Charge of Muslim Affairs,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen.

A very good morning. *Selamat Datang* to the Malay Heritage Centre. To our Muslim guests, *Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri*.

2 On behalf of the Malay Heritage Foundation and National Heritage Board, I would like to thank Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong for honouring us with his presence this morning, despite his busy schedule.

Please allow me now to say a few words in Malay, before continuing the rest of my speech in English.

Strengthening Community Support for Malay Heritage (Spirit of Gotong Royong)

3 Sejak projek Taman Warisan ini dimulakan lebih 12 tahun yang lalu, ramai yang telah menyumbang kepada pelbagai usaha untuk melestarikan warisan kita. Ini mencerminkan semangat gotong-royong yang memang sudah sebatih di kalangan masyarakat kita. Sokongan pemerintah serta sikap murah hati golongan penderma juga telah membolehkan kita melakarkan pelbagai program di Taman Warisan dan merata Singapura. Berkat sokongan yang sepadu ini, kita telah dapat mendekati masyarakat umum dengan lebih meluas dan semakin ramai berpeluang untuk mengenali serta menghargai sumbangan budaya dan warisan kita kepada pembangunan negara.

4 Sepertimana yang telah dinyatakan oleh Perdana Menteri semasa berucap di Rapat Umum Hari Kebangsaan minggu lalu, pihak pemerintah akan terus menyokong usaha untuk mengekalkan budaya dan warisan kita. Ini adalah satu berita baik yang amat dialu-alukan. Saya percaya, komitmen dan sokongan ini akan

berterusan di bawah naungan Kementerian Kebudayaan, Masyarakat dan Belia yang baru nanti.

5 Saya juga ingin mengambil kesempatan ini untuk mengucapkan ribuan terimakasih kepada kesemua pihak atas segala sumbangan dan sokongan yang telah diberikan sejauh ini. Hasil kerja keras dan kerjasama yang telah terjalin dapat kita lihat dan nikmati hari ini. Saya harap ini akan mendorong mereka untuk terus memberikan sumbangan kepada Taman Warisan.

6 Kami bersedia untuk bekerjasama dengan pelbagai pihak yang berkepentingan dan mendekati segenap lapisan masyarakat untuk melestarikan warisan kita. Ini termasuk usaha untuk melibatkan tenaga dinamik dan bakat kreatif golongan muda untuk sama-sama mencorak hala tuju perkembangan warisan yang kita ingini untuk masa hadapan. Nasihat dan panduan daripada mereka yang lebih berpengalaman akan kekal relevan untuk mencapai keseimbangan. Harapan saya, ramai lagi akan tampil ke hadapan untuk menyokong dan terus menyumbang kepada Taman Warisan. Dengan cara begini, kita dapat sama-sama memperkaya institusi warisan kita supaya ia terus mekar dan menjadi kebanggaan kita semua.

Translation of the Malay text:

[Since the Malay Heritage Centre project started more than 12 years ago, many have stepped forward to contribute and support various efforts to preserve our heritage. This reflects the "gotong-royong" spirit that is synonymous with our community. Support from the government and the generosity of our donors have also enabled us to conduct programmes and activities at the Malay Heritage Centre and all over Singapore. Through this support, we have been able to reach out to the wider community and provide opportunities for more people to get to know and appreciate our culture and heritage contribution to nation building.

As mentioned in the Prime Minister's National Day Rally speech last week, the government will continue to support our efforts to preserve our culture and heritage. This is indeed good news which all of us can look forward to. We are confident that this commitment and support will continue under the new ministry.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all their support and contribution, thus far. The result of all the hard work and collaborations can be seen and enjoyed today. I hope this will further encourage them to continue to support and contribute to the Malay Heritage Centre. We will work with various stakeholders and reach out to wide spectrum of the community. This includes efforts to engage our younger generation, by leveraging on their dynamism and talent, so that together, we can shape the future direction of our heritage. I hope more will step forward to support and contribute to the Malay Heritage Centre so that together, we can further enrich our heritage institution so it continues to flourish into an institution that all of us can be proud of.]

Story of the Malay Community as Part of the Larger Singapore Story

7 I am sure when you stepped into the compound this morning you can already see and sense the new lease of life at the Malay Heritage Centre. The revamped Malay Heritage Centre will offer many new possibilities and opportunities. The improved facilities and additional flexible spaces for travelling exhibitions and

performances will provide the platforms for us to partner with other institutions, cultural organisations and aspiring artists to promote our heritage. This is aligned with the Malay Heritage Foundation's objectives to build capacity and focus capabilities in the arts and heritage, and strengthen our relationship with key stakeholders in the arts and heritage landscape.

8 However, more than just the physical aspects and the new facilities, we hope the change will reflect a much deeper meaning for all our visitors. We hope that the new storyline will provide our visitors with a better understanding and appreciation of the Malay community in Singapore – how we have developed, progressed, evolved and contributed to the development of Singapore. In fact, our understanding of Singapore's multi-cultural heritage will not be complete without a visit to the Malay Heritage Centre. So, do come to the centre.

Inspiring the Heritage Journey Forward

9 As mentioned earlier, since the start of the Malay Heritage Centre project more than 12 years ago, many have come forward and contributed to the various efforts to promote our heritage. They included community leaders, those in the teaching profession, culture, arts and heritage experts and practitioners, volunteers from various groups and many others. This is a reflection of the "gotong-royong" spirit that has been the hallmark of our community.

10 Support from the government as well as generous contributions from our donors have enabled us to conduct various programmes at the Malay Heritage Centre and island-wide. This has also enabled us to reach out to the wider Singaporeans, so that they can get to know our culture and heritage better and appreciate our contribution to nation building. I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation to all who have supported and contributed to the Malay Heritage Centre and our efforts. All the hardwork and many collaborations have come to fruition today. I hope this will encourage them to continue supporting and contributing to the Malay Heritage Centre and our efforts.

11 At the same time, we hope, many more will step forward to give their support and contribution. We are open to working with various stakeholders and interest groups and reach out to people from all walks of life. This includes efforts to engage and involve our younger generation. We hope to leverage on our youth's dynamism and creative talents to bring our heritage, further forward. Advice and guidance from our elders and more experienced practitioners will still be relevant to provide the balance and benefit of hindsight. We hope that together, we can shape the future direction of our heritage that will inspire the next generation.

Conclusion

12 I hope you will enjoy your visit to the museum later and help us spread the word to encourage more to come, see and experience for themselves our rich and unique heritage. We hope each visit will bring you on a journey of discovery that will inspire you to keep coming back for more. Thank you.