

Annex - English Translation of Malay Speech

33. Madam Deputy Speaker, Singapore must continue to be a place where there will be opportunities for families to better their circumstances. Where they can aspire for their children to have a better and brighter future. And where our people believe that our brand of Singaporean meritocracy works. To achieve this, we need a strong partnership across sectors, each doing their part: the Government stepping in to develop policies that act as enablers to help everyone progress; the community harnessing resources to address the needs of the community; and volunteers bringing their skills and talents to bear.
34. The mark of a strong social compact is when the successful give back to society. We appreciate the efforts of our Malay/Muslim Organisations (MMO) who have long played important roles in uplifting the community. Many Malay/Muslim professionals have also now stepped forward to serve and contribute to those who are in need. For example, Lawyers@M³ brings together lawyers, legal professionals, and individuals with legal backgrounds to conduct talks, Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) workshops, and pro bono legal clinics for the community. In their spare time, a group of soldiers also volunteer as mentors at ITE College East through Project Pathfinder, serving as strong role models for the students they journey with. The Muslim Healthcare Professionals Association also works with M³@Towns to bring health-related programmes and workshops closer to home, to better benefit the community.
35. One of the traits that our community can be proud of is the progress that we made over the years, with the community and Government working together, putting their minds and hands to the task. The self-help group MENDAKI has become a model that many parties abroad are keen to learn from. It was formed 40 years ago, at a time when our community leaders were concerned about the educational performance of our Malay children. They were committed to helping Malay children reach their fullest potential and attain success. Today, MENDAKI remains relevant as education is a key driver to uplifting the community. MENDAKI successfully mobilised the energies and passion of its many volunteers to drive programmes like the MENDAKI Tuition Scheme and KelasMateMatika, for students across all levels today. These volunteers understood the custom and culture of the community, and helped to augment the Government's efforts to improve Malay/Muslim educational outcomes in tandem with other communities. Today, 99% of every Malay student cohort completes at least 10 years of education. This is a meaningful achievement, as the 10 years of education provides the foundation to enable us to further our studies at the postsecondary level and pursue lifelong learning. I am heartened by the progress made by the Malay/Muslim community, which was made possible due to the awareness of the importance of education as well as the hard work and close partnership of all parties. Let us continue the efforts to enable our children to achieve their fullest potential.

36. Today, we must take reference from the latest findings from research and science. The research shows that the early years are crucial to a child's development. Therefore, a key aspect of our strategy to sustain social mobility in Singapore is early childhood development. We must ensure that children are enrolled in preschool by around age 3. We are doubling down on our efforts in Project Dian@M³ to support families with young children between the ages of 3 and 6, and will also facilitate priority enrolment for children from lower-income families into Anchor Operator preschools and MOE Kindergartens. Our Dian Ambassadors have started visiting these families fortnightly, working with families to read with their children and support the parents in being involved in the development of their young children.

37. Over the decades, the Malay/Muslim community has made great progress on all fronts, including in achieving stability, self-reliance and social mobility, while continuously giving back both to the community and to the nation. As we face new challenges and as our society continues to grow and evolve, we will continue to work together with community leaders, Malay/Muslim Organisations, and our many volunteers to bring the community closer together to excel and uplift the most vulnerable. I am confident that our Malay/Muslim community is well placed to forge ahead towards an even brighter future as a Community of Success.