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**SPEECH BY MR GAN KIM YONG, MINISTER FOR MANPOWER  
AT THE BERITA HARIAN ACHIEVER OF THE YEAR 2010 AWARD  
WEDNESDAY, 28 JULY 2010, 8.15PM  
SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, SINGAPORE**

Speaker of Parliament, Mr Abdullah Tarmugi,

Acting Editor-in-Chief, English and Malay Newspaper Division, Mr Han Fook Kwang,

Editor, Berita Harian, Mr Guntor Sadali

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

**Introduction**

Good evening. I am pleased to be here tonight to join you in celebrating the achievement of an outstanding Malay/Muslim individual who has made great contributions and has done the community and Singapore proud.

2. The fact that this is the 12<sup>th</sup> year Berita Harian is giving out the Achiever Award speaks well of the community. It clearly shows that we have exemplary and exceptional individuals who can help the community achieve greater progress in this rapidly changing world. I also understand from Berita Harian that there is no shortage of nominees for the awards every year, and this is a clear testimony to the progress of the community.

### **Past Winners of the BH Achiever Award**

3. Looking at the list of past winners, I am pleased to see that the award recipients come from diverse fields, ranging from medical research to fashion design, the arts, sports, as well as humanitarian and social work. They include two individuals who excelled in the sciences - Dr Mansoor Jalil, the first Malay who achieved a first-class degree in physics from the University of Cambridge, and Associate Professor Abdul Aziz Nather, a renowned expert in bone research and tissue banking.

4. Four other recipients were leaders in the creative field -- renowned potter Mr Iskandar Jalil; top musician, Mr Iskandar Mirza Ismail; internationally renowned fashion designer Mr Ashley Isham, and last year's winner, cultural ambassador, Madam Som Said.

5. You also have my fellow Parliamentarian and Chair of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Manpower Madam Halimah Yacob, who exemplifies the adaptability and versatility of the Singapore workers she represents. She has proven herself to not only succeed but excel in many fields – as a unionist, as a Member of Parliament, and as a wife and mother.

6. I am also proud to see among the list, Haji Abu Bakar Maidin, a prominent community leader; Mr Zulkifli Baharuddin, a former Nominated Member of Parliament, Mr Mardan Mamat, our top professional golfer; and Dato' Zain Abdullah a prominent businessman. All of them have made great contributions and created an impact on the community in one way or another.

7. I know you are all waiting in anticipation to find out who is the recipient for 2010. At this point, I can only say that he, or she, (we will know later this evening and I don't want to give anything away yet) like previous winners, will serve as a role model for all of us, and inspire all Malay/Muslims to become a Community of Excellence.

## **Giving back to the community**

8. This year, I understand Berita Harian received 20 nominations for the award. It is heartening to see how these outstanding individuals are contributing to our society and inspiring our people. I am sure the judges must have had a hard time deciding on the winner, due to the excellent quality of all the candidates.

9. These individuals are high achievers in their own way. The skills they possess, the values they embody and the determination to excel will instill confidence in the Malay community to progress and prosper together with all Singaporeans.

10. It is important for the successful members to always give back to society and help those who are less successful – whether they are Award recipients or not. They can act as mentors to the younger Malay Singaporeans.

## **Progress of the Malay / Muslim community**

11. In about two week's time, we will be celebrating Singapore's 45<sup>th</sup> National Day. Together, we have progressed from a tiny island state with an uncertain outlook to a vibrant global city with a promising future.

12. The Malay community as a whole has made significant progress in many areas, both academically and professionally. We are seeing more Malay graduates and professionals every year. There are more Malays in areas like medicine, engineering, legal services, IT and so on. There is a growing talent pool from which we can draw upon to help the community.

13. The general profile of our Malay workers has also improved over the years. With better academic performance, more members from the community have access to better opportunities, and hence, better paying jobs. The proportion of Malay workers who are in the Professional, Managerial, Executive Technical (PMET) occupations has risen significantly in the past 45 years - to at least four times more, over the last two decades, from just 7.2% in 1980 to 28.4% in 2008.

14. These achievements are even more meaningful because they are the result of your own efforts, based on merit. The Malays, together with their political and community leaders, have worked hand in hand with the government to make progress in all fields.

15. This evening's award takes place amidst an upbeat outlook of the economy. After experiencing a slowdown last year, Singapore's economy is expected to grow at a very healthy rate this year. Just two weeks ago, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) upgraded its 2010 economic growth forecast to 13% to 15%, up from the earlier estimate of 7% to 9%.

16. While we celebrate our strong economic growth, let us not become complacent. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently cautioned that there could be further economic shock. And Singapore, being an open economy, will be exposed to the volatility of the global economy. We should instead focus on pushing ahead with our productivity drive at all levels to transform Singapore into a productivity-driven economy so that we can enjoy sustainable and inclusive growth.

17. For the Malay community, the emphasis on education is bearing fruit. We must not let up on these efforts. The Government remains committed to enabling the Malay community to make continuous progress even as we face an increasing competitive environment.

### **In conclusion**

18. We are all encouraged by the progress and achievements of the Malay-Muslims community. I am sure the presence of outstanding role models in the community will help to inspire younger members of the community to go even further in their pursuit for excellence.

Thank you, and *Selamat Maju Jaya* (wish you success)