

**SPEECH BY DR YAACOB IBRAHIM, MINISTER FOR INFORMATION,
COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS, AT THE 10TH MALAY LITERARY AWARD
PRESENTATION CEREMONY 2011 ON SATURDAY, 30 JULY 2011, AT 3.00 PM
AT SHANGRI-LA HOTEL**

Mr Hawazi Daipi,

Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Manpower, and
Chairman of the Malay Language Council, Singapore.

Mr Masagos Zulkifli Masagos Mohamed,

Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
and Chairman of the Malay Literary Award 2011 Organising Committee.

Malay Literary Award 2011 Organising Committee

Recipients of the Malay Literary Awards and writers

Ladies and gentlemen

I am very honoured to be here with you at this Malay Literary Award 2011
Presentation Ceremony.

2. The literary scene in Singapore as a whole will become more vibrant with the
integrated plan to develop literary art. And Malay literature is not excluded in
participating to reap the benefits of this positive development.

Literature and Heritage

3. Malay literature, in particular, has an important role in developing the heritage
and conveying the emotions, feelings, the pulse and voice of the community. In
producing Malay literary works, apart from the language, the content is filled with the
Malays' thinking, views of life, philosophy and civilisation, especially in the context of
our multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society.

4. If this diversity could be well managed and woven beautifully, readers will certainly be attracted to learn about and to read the literary works and thereby perpetuate our heritage through literature.

5. I am confident that as Singapore develops as a cosmopolitan city, Malay literature will continue to get stronger support. I am also confident that Malay literary bodies, particularly the Malay Language Council, Singapore will play a more important role in ensuring the consistency of the quality of the literary works produced.

6. In this matter, the Malay Literary Award has played an important role by giving recognition to talented writers and quality literary works.

7. The Malay Literary Award which is entering its 10th year is able to motivate writers to contribute in a prolific manner not only quantitatively but also in raising the quality of the literary works produced.

Government's Support for Literature

8. The Government will continue to provide support to enliven the nation's literary scene. There are now various grants for writers and literary bodies to develop and roll out Malay literary works.

9. Besides that, there are also various literary activities carried out throughout the year for literary enthusiasts to participate in, such as programmes during the Malay Language Month and the Singapore Writers' Festival.

10. It is hoped that all these activities will enliven the local literary scene and provide a platform for writers and literature enthusiasts to meet, exchange ideas and produce even more dynamic works.

Nurturing Talent

11. To further develop the potential of the local Malay literary world, we must

cultivate a new generation of writers and provide space and opportunities for new writers to continue to hone their craft either locally or overseas.

12. For example, recently two of our young writers had the opportunity to attend the week-long MASTERA (South East Asia Literary Council) novel writing workshops in Bogor, Indonesia. We hope that with such exposure, these writers will be able to sharpen their writing skills and inject freshness to the Malay literary scene in Singapore.

Closing

13. We know that Singapore used to be a Malay literary and publication hub once upon a time. I think the writers we have today are not only able to repeat this tradition, but also have the confidence to create their own glorious history.

14. Now, with various initiatives to grow the arts in Singapore, we can certainly look forward to having more interesting and better quality works from our writers in future. There may even be space and opportunities for writers to experiment by mixing various media to produce more dynamic literary works.

15. What is certain is that we can expect Malay literature in Singapore to continue to develop. Consciously or unconsciously, this transition has paved the way to widen the space for Singapore Malay literature. Although there will be differences, Singapore Malay literature will certainly make meaningful contributions to the development of Malay literature in the Archipelago, apart from exploring opportunities and establishing itself on the world's literary stage.

16. In conclusion, I wish to congratulate the Malay Language Council, Singapore for organising the 10th Malay Literary Award. I also wish to extend my congratulations to all recipients of the Literary Awards. May your success today inspire other literary writers to produce quality works and thus enrich the heritage of Singapore Malay literature.

Thank you.
