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NOTE: The following speech was delivered by Mr Sidek Saniff on behalf of President Wee Kim Wee.

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT WEE KIM WEE,
AT A TEA PARTY IN COMMEMORATION OF THE PROPHET
MOHAMMED'S BIRTHDAY AT THE PENTHOUSE OF THE MINISTRY
OF ENVIRONMENT ON SATURDAY, 28 JANUARY 1989 AT 4 PM

First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting me to this function. I am truly sorry not to be able to join you on this most auspicious and happy occasion, which I have been looking forward to very much.

As dedicated leaders, you have undoubtedly contributed much towards maintaining and improving the well-being of the Muslim community, in particular, and consequently to the Singapore society in general.

Over the last couple of decades the Muslim community has made considerable progress, particularly in the field of education, judging by the increasing number of Muslim students in tertiary institutions of learning. A higher level of educational attainment would inevitably lead to an economic upliftment of the community.

The solidarity of the people of various races, cultures, languages and religions in Singapore which helps us achieve political stability is the key to our economic success. It is, therefore, important for us to maintain racial and religious harmony and be continuously sensitive to ethnic factors in every field of life in a plural society such as our's.

As individuals, we are aware of the importance of unity among Singaporeans and the need to exercise tolerance and demonstrate a spirit of mutual help and give and take. The same spirit must also be instilled in our children and the younger generation. We need to cultivate such attitudes first in our own family, then in our neighbours, in our community and finally in our fellow Singaporeans. We shall do this so that our children will develop the proper values so they will not become completely indifferent to other people and to the community. I, therefore, fully agree with MUIS President that the family is an important institution in the community. A united family can help create a united community which, in turn, can contribute towards bringing about a united, harmonious and stable nation.

I am happy to note that MUIS and other Muslim organisations are working out programmes to solve the social problems of the community. I fully support the suggestion that the mosques and other Muslim organisations together with the People's Association, Community Centres and other social bodies pool their resources and work out programmes to minimise, if not to eliminate, the problems of drug abuse completely. The problem of drug abuse in the Malay community is a very serious one.

I also note that Muslims in Singapore have contributed a great deal of moral and material support towards improving the standard of the community's religious, social, economic and educational achievements. This spirit of self-help is commendable and should be further developed and encouraged. I am confident that the Muslim community will continue with their good work by doing social services in other fields and ensuring all-round progress and well-being for the Muslims in Singapore. The Government, on its part, would render its support to assist the Muslim community enter the mainstream of national life through the provision of special education and training opportunities.

In my address at the opening of the Seventh Parliament early this month, I said that: "Carrying out my Government's programme to improve the lives of Singaporeans, define National Ideology, consolidate political stability, help the lower income groups and strengthen multi-racial and multi-religious harmony are major undertakings involving all Singaporeans."

I have no doubt that the Muslim community, in general, and you as community leaders, in particular, would contribute and help achieve these aims and programmes. When we achieve these goals we can be assured that Singapore will continue to enjoy peace, prosperity, progress and racial harmony.

May God bless you all and give you strength to carry out your responsibilities and your duties.
