

OPENING ADDRESS BY DR AMEEN TALIB, CHAIRMAN OF THE SINGAPORE MUSLIM EDUCATION FUND (SMEF) MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AT THE SMEF DISBURSEMENT CEREMONY ON SATURDAY 3 MARCH 2018 AT 1.20PM AT AMP AUDITORIUM

Mr Amrin Amin
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Home Affairs & Ministry of Health

Mr Abdul Hamid Abdullah
Chairman of AMP Group

Members of the AMP Board of Directors *(to exclude if only Chairman is attending)*
and SMEF Management Committee

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Assalamu'alaikum and a very good afternoon.

Thank you for attending today's SMEF Disbursement Ceremony. We appreciate each and everyone's presence.

Today marks our fifth annual disbursement under the fund. Some time back, about 7 or 8 years ago, a group of us activists was discussing about the underrepresentation of Malay/Muslims in the Law and Medicine fields. The idea of SMEF was then mooted by our co-Chairman and my good friend, Mr Amin Sidek.

The core group met a few times over coffee and we met a number of people; some pledging their support and some questioning the sustainability of the idea. We wanted a credible organisation to manage the funds and AMP was our natural choice. The core group was committed in ensuring the sustainability of the fund for at least the first

three years; after which we hoped that the fund can then be sustained through raising more funds.

We started small. The first disbursement was in 2013, where we awarded two medical undergraduates pursuing their studies overseas, with scholarships amounting to a total of \$10,000. We are happy to learn that our inaugural awardees have both graduated and are now practicing as a doctor and a houseman respectively. *Alhamdulillah.*

In 2014, we were able to award three medical and two law students with scholarships amounting to a total of \$21,000, and the following year, we disbursed a total \$28,000 worth of scholarships to five medical and one law students.

In 2016, we named our scholarship for the students pursuing law at overseas universities after Singapore's first Attorney-General, Professor Ahmad Ibrahim, as well as launched a new award named after the prominent Lieutenant Adnan to mark the 75th anniversary of his passing in defending our nation. This special award is to recognise diploma students, who have overcome adversities or those who show leadership qualities in their uniformed group CCA. That year, the disbursement amounted to a total of \$41,100 for six SMEF Medicine Scholarship, three SMEF-Professor Ahmad Ibrahim Scholarship and three SMEF-Lieutenant Adnan Award recipients.

Ladies and gentlemen

Today, *alhamdulillah*, we will be giving out the highest amount of scholarships and awards thus far – at a total worth of \$71,000 – to the highest number of awardees at 24 students. Together with today's disbursement, we would have disbursed a total of \$171,000 under the SMEF.

We are humbled by the donations that came in through our well-wishers and the various fundraising initiatives that we have held – the latest being the collaboration with Arnold's Fried Chicken.

We hope that the support from our donors will continue in the years to come as the number of applications we received over the last five years have increased especially for the SMEF-Lieutenant Adnan Award. This indicates the need for initiatives like the SMEF and *insya'Allah*, we will endeavour to continue taking the community to greater heights.

Before I end, I would like to congratulate all of our recipients today. I wish you the best in your academic journey and hope that you will continue to do yourself, your parents and the community proud.

Thank you.

END