

**SPEECH BY DR MD BADRUN NAFIS SAION, CHAIRMAN OF AMP  
SINGAPORE AT THE COMMUNITY IN REVIEW 2021 SEMINAR ON  
THURSDAY 25 MARCH AT 8.00 PM VIA ZOOM**

Esteemed speakers

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen.

Good evening.

1. It is my great pleasure to welcome everyone to our Community in Review 2021 Seminar.
2. AMP Singapore, together with our research subsidiary, RIMA, organises the Community in Review or CIR every year to discuss issues that are pertinent not only to the Malay/Muslim community, but also the larger Singaporean society.
3. It is a platform for intellectual discourse and the exchange of ideas so that we can all contribute towards increasing the body of knowledge on such issues in a collaborative and collective manner.
4. Today, the CIR will focus on a very important topic, which has been a great cause of concern throughout the pandemic – our workers. In particular, how can our workers stay relevant in this fast-paced, ever-changing digital world we live in?

**THE CHANGING NATURE OF SINGAPORE'S EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE**

5. We now stand on the brink of a technological revolution that has significantly changed the way we live. Dubbed the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0, the convergence and synergy of disruptive innovations like autonomous vehicles, Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence, are transforming the world of work and how businesses operate in almost every industry, in every country, and creating ground-breaking opportunities.

6. The line between the digital and physical spaces is blurring. This enables a small country like Singapore to transcend beyond our size and geography.
7. As the economy embraces technology, digital skills are increasingly needed to thrive at work. Businesses in Singapore have to adjust their strategies to better prepare for the economy.
8. In his 2021 Budget speech, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat shared that the employment landscape is undergoing fundamental changes, and COVID-19 will accelerate these changes. There has been a big focus on digital transformation and upskilling workers to prepare for the digital shift. A plethora of measures and initiatives have been rolled out as part of efforts to help workers and enterprises build stronger digital capabilities to succeed in a post-pandemic future. It is clear that the nation's transformation into a Smart Nation remains a priority.

#### **IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DIGITALISATION**

9. Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Singapore and the world early last year, employers were forced to rethink their operations to protect their workforce and maintain continuity and stability. Business continuity measures have pushed organisations to find new ways of enabling their workforce to stay engaged, while the digital space has been an enabler of all sorts of activities. We now see remote working and learning becoming a new way of life.
10. Singapore's experience has shown that technology can be instrumental in helping us emerge from difficult times to become more resilient, more sustainable, and more liveable.
11. COVID-19 is a wake-up call that going digital is not an option – it is imperative.
12. As such, the Malay/Muslim community must continue to keep in tandem with the transformation towards Industry 4.0, and Malay/Muslim business leaders must sculpt an organisational culture that motivate workers to embrace digitalisation.

## **PERCEIVED CHALLENGES TO DIGITALISATION**

13. Digitalisation can create nearly as much uncertainty as it does opportunity. Many will struggle with the challenges brought about by the pandemic, particularly vulnerable groups such as low-income households, persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Even as digitalisation allows life to function to some degree of normalcy amidst the pandemic, it also widens the digital divide in our society.
  
14. It is not surprising that this technological revolution has raised fears among many workers who feel that there may not be enough work for them in the future. A 2019 survey by PwC showed one in five Singaporeans being concerned about the future impact of technology on their jobs. 58 percent of respondents were worried about being made redundant by technology, while 36 percent feared they do not have the right skills. Slightly more than half also believe that automation will significantly change or make their job obsolete within the next ten years.
  
15. The acceleration of innovation and the velocity of disruption can indeed be perplexing even for the most well-informed. However, the effects of the experience with the pandemic will be long-lasting, and the post COVID-19 world will increasingly be driven by Industry 4.0 technologies.
  
16. This is the nature of change, and although no one knows what the long-term implications will be, the short-term reality is simple: We must prepare for and embrace digitalisation. We can start with being open to new ideas despite the potential discomfort of ambiguity.
  
17. For the Malay/Muslim community, we must not miss out on the jobs of the future. Disruption is certain, but so is opportunity. The digital transformation is as much about reengineering business operations as it is about empowering people to work in new ways.
  
18. Today, we have invited four eminent speakers to share with us future employment prospects for Singapore, and how we can stay relevant in the future economy as we embark on this digital transformation.

19. I hope we will have a fruitful and engaging session.

20. Thank you.

**END**