

**SPEECH BY MR HENG SWEE KEAT
MINISTER FOR FINANCE
ADVISER TO TAMPINES GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS AT
GENDERANG BAHASA & BUDAYA – LAUNCH OF BULAN BAHASA
@ TAMPINES 2017
SUNDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2017, 8.00PM
FESTIVE PLAZA, OUR TAMPINES HUB**

Minister Masagos Zulkifli

Mr Desmond Choo

Mr Baey Yam Keng

Ms Cheng Li Hui

Mdm Salamah Abdoll
Chairman, Genderang Bahasa & Budaya 2017

Chairmen and members of Tampines GRC MAECs

Grassroots leaders, friends and neighbours

INTRODUCTION

1. *Salam Sejahtera*. Welcome to the launch of Bulan Bahasa 2017 at Tampines.

2. Just back in June and July, we held our wonderful Ramadan Bazaar here, then we took part in the colourful Malay PAssionArts Festival —many of you came and enjoyed the festivities with your friends and loved ones. Today, it's very nice to see so many familiar faces from our Malay community again, taking part in Bulan Bahasa.

3. Each time our Malay community leaders and residents gather at Our Tampines Hub, we find new ways to connect with one another, and to showcase and share your artistic and cultural traditions with friends of other races. You promote multicultural understanding in Tampines and help make Tampines an active and vibrant home. You are a big part of the cultural richness and kampung spirit of Tampines. *Tampines Boleh!*

Bulan Bahasa Celebrations

4. Bulan Bahasa was started in 1988 to preserve and promote the use of Bahasa Melayu in Singapore. Singapore's Mother Tongue languages is an issue close to my heart. When I was at MOE, I liked talking with our language teachers to understand their challenges and joys in teaching Mother Tongue, and got to observe how passionate many of them are about passing on the beauty, history and culture contained in each language.

5. Having a good grasp of the English Language lets our young people stand tall and be understood around the world, opening up opportunities and new worlds for them, within and beyond our shores. At the same time, when they have a deep love for the learning of Mother Tongue languages, our young people can connect with their cultures and communities, opening up new insights into and appreciation for their roots. A multilingual, multicultural Singapore is built out of individuals who love, respect and continually learn about theirs and others' languages and cultures.

6. And we should encourage ways to cultivate this love for our Mother Tongue languages. Bulan Bahasa is an important, great way to remind and demonstrate the richness and beauty of the Malay language for our young. Through drama performances and singing competitions, Bulan Bahasa brings the language to life, and makes it exciting for students to learn more about their community and culture.

8. So we should keep on holding Bulan Bahasa, and keep seeing how we can make it better from year to year. We have widened the focus to embrace the performing arts and learning journeys. And there is also greater emphasis on the use of Malay at home. As we know, all good habits start from the home, and I hope

parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, will have many moments of bonding and learning, keeping the Malay culture and traditions alive at home.

Conclusion

7. Please join me to thank Madam Salamah and her Organising Committee. Her enthusiastic group of grassroots leaders and volunteers have worked hard to put together this wonderful evening of language, arts and culture for all of us to enjoy. I hope that we will continue to work together to preserve our Mother Tongues as a treasure chest of our traditional customs and values, and through such meaningful activities, make Tampines a great place for living and learning for our young.

8. Allow me to end with a *pantun*:

*Pohon berangan tempat bertemu
Girang sungguh teman dan saudara
Pergilah tuan menyebarkan ilmu
Binalah bangsa bangunkan negara*

Sekian dan selamat berjumpa lagi!