

SPEECH OF MS RAHAYU MOHAMAD, PRESIDENT OF PPIS

PPIS' WOMEN'S FORUM – HARI RAYA CELEBRATION 2018
Saturday, 7 July 2018 10.30am – 1.30pm
Orchid Ballroom at Royal Palm Clarke Quay

Assalaamu'alaikum Wr Wb, Peace be upon you

Deputy Director, Capacity Building & Interfaith
Engagement at MUIS, Dr Mohammad Hannan,

My fellow Board Members of PPIS,

CEO of PPIS, Mr Mohd Ali Mahmood,

Distinguished Guests, Volunteers and Staff,

1. A very good morning to all!
2. It gives us great pleasure to host you today at PPIS' Women's Forum – Hari Raya Celebration 2018.
3. Last year, we had a memorable time at our first inter-community Hari Raya event where we weaved in an educational element for our non-Muslim friends to know a little more about Islam, the Malay culture and its Raya traditions in Singapore.

4. Today, we decided to extend the conversation by having fellow ladies from different faiths share their experiences of their communities so that we can learn from one another. Something that we did keep from last year's event is our Hari Raya fun fact cards, available on every table. Feel free to ask our PPIS hosts if you have any questions.

5. In a R.E.D preliminary survey handed out from January to May 2018 at 5 locations, 143 out of 199 Muslim women or 72% of our respondents from different backgrounds expressed that having a good religious life was the top aspiration to them. They want to learn and practice Islam better and chose religion as the most important life goal 10 years from now. As we study deeper about our own religion though, we learn that living harmoniously with others is a key teaching in Islam.

6. Therefore, while it is essential that we maintain solidarity within our own communities and preserve our unique identities, we also do not want to be a fragmented Singapore. Thus, the need to strike a balance between seeking commonalities and recognising and appreciating difference. As stated in the Holy Qur'an Chapter 30 Verse 22, "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours."

7. As we grow up together, go to school together, play and work together, live the Singapore system together, thereby sharing mutual experiences and realities, I am sure we can agree that most of us hold common values and have common dreams. While we celebrate festivities together, like today, we too have similar issues cutting across religious and ethnic communities here in Singapore. Yet, there may also be challenges that are distinct to a particular group.

8. Hence, the reason for today's discussion cum celebration is to understand the challenges each community faces, uncover the differences and similarities between us, hear how our communities favour cooperation and collaboration and finally, explore how we can overcome these obstacles collectively, be they mutual or not.

9. As we support one another on common causes, we are also connecting communities. We hope that this event will foster a greater understanding as well as commitment in working together towards making Singapore a happier, better and more equitable and humane place to live for everyone. With PPIS' vision to be "A Compassionate Organisation Connecting Communities", we are eager to discover more from you on ways that we can all connect.

10. It is also our hope that you feel comfortable contributing to the discussion and asking questions, either to the panellists or one another throughout the event.

11. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our keynote speaker, four panellists and moderator for the time spent in their preparation to share with us today and to all of you for spending your Saturday morning with us. May today be a start of stronger friendships and may we create more opportunities for us to understand one another better and to work together regardless of our faith or race.

12. Thank you.