

SPEECH BY AMP SINGAPORE CHAIRMAN

The following is the text of the speech delivered by Dr Md Badrun Nafis Saion, Chairman of AMP Singapore, at the AMP 4th National Convention.



Dr Md Badrun Nafis Saion, Chairman of AMP Singapore

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen
A very good morning to all.

Thank you so much for joining us here today on a Saturday morning for our 4th National Convention.

We are heartened to be in the company of like-minded community leaders and advocates at our event today.

Let us begin proper by reciting *Surah Al-Fatihah* with the intention that Allah bless this gathering and He guides us in our speech and action. *Al-Fatihah*.

The AMP Convention – A Tradition

A model organisation in community leadership. That is the vision of AMP and our National Convention is an integral part of our work. The Convention by AMP is a tradition that has spanned three decades where we mobilise professionals, practitioners, activists, and those with a heart for the community to gather and think of strategies and solutions for the challenges faced by our Muslim community.

The tradition began 32 years ago, with our very first Convention, which was attended by 500 professionals who wanted to play a part in the thought leadership of the community. Back then, the Malay community was plagued by many issues, including poor performance in education, high divorce rates, drug addiction issues, and so on. The Convention offered a platform for these

issues to be discussed and debated and solutions to be proposed. It is important to note that the formation of AMP was the direct result of the very first Convention in 1990.

Three decades later, the essence of the Convention remains. It was and still is a platform for us to collectively brainstorm for ideas for the community to help them face the challenges ahead.

Tribute to Our Founding Members

In planning for this Convention, we remember the efforts of those before us, who had the same passion and desire as we do to see our community thrive. We are deeply grateful to our founding members, many of whom are here with us today. They are the ones who first mooted the idea of the Convention and kickstarted this enduring effort. We also take this opportunity to remember the late Mr Yang Razali Kassim, who was one of the founding members of AMP and the first Deputy Chairman of AMP. He was also Chairman of AMP from 2004 to 2006. Through the years, he remained involved and concerned about the development of AMP and the community. He regularly met with the AMP Board to share his thoughts and ideas, which we deeply valued.

It is our hope to continue our founding members' legacy with today's Convention. We may have made some tweaks and adjustments, but the objective remains the same. We are here together today because we want to do what we can to help think of ideas and strategies to create a community that is successful, dynamic and thriving.

Trust the Process

Seeing is believing, they say. If that was the case, Singapore wouldn't be where we are today. I would like to encourage us to reflect further on that statement. Perhaps, we need to believe first, before we see the change. Similarly, we must believe in our community. We as community leaders must believe that our Muslim community can and will continue to strive and progress.

Identity and Community Leadership at the Intersections

Our societal challenges have evolved. As a young developed nation, the concerns we experience now have added complexity. The problems we face cross boundaries – ethnic, socio-economic, and religious boundaries, to name a few. Hence, our leaders need to move beyond our own institution's interests, and be able to thrive in this intersectional space. We believe that this is a crucial space that our community leaders must fill.

Being a Muslim is a key aspect of our identity. But we remain cognisant that our Muslim community does not live in a vacuum. We live among fellow Singaporeans and other communities. Hence, we need to be confident of who we are so that we can navigate our relationships well with our Singapore society.

How can we do this? We believe by working on the fundamentals. As community leaders, we can find courage to empathise, collaborate and build alliances better. We can build our competencies to thrive at the intersections.

Convo 4 – A Fresh Approach

This year's Convention takes on a slightly different approach from previous Conventions. In the past, we would come before you to present strategies and recommendations that the panels had already brainstormed. We would then discuss and debate these with you, the Convention participants, to get your endorsement. Our approach is slightly different this time. We want to ideate the strategies and solutions together with you. We want to focus on co-solutioning. We want to hear from you what your real, lived experiences are. We want your expertise, and we ask that you dig deep and share your knowledge with all of us, as we craft the strategies for the community together, as one.

I see many familiar faces here today, many of whom have decades of experience in the Muslim community space. There is much that we can learn from these veterans and I hope they will share their deep knowledge with us. I am also heartened to see newer, younger faces here among us. It is

important for our youths to step forward and share their thoughts with us, about what their concerns are for our community, and about what they want for our community. And when they do, we need to listen to them. After all, they are the voice of our future.

The Importance of Stepping Forward

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot stress enough the importance of mobilising talents within the community. We need more of us to step forward and give back, especially in the form of thought leadership for the community. This is where the AMP Convention presents a good opportunity for professionals, practitioners, academics, youths and activists, as well as anyone who has an interest in catalysing the progress of our community, to do their part.

I am heartened that so many of you have stepped forward to participate in the Convention and to share your thoughts and concerns. I hope that your active participation in the community will continue. I hope that we will always have a vested interest in our community and remain involved in steering our community's progress in the years and decades to come.

It doesn't have to be in the form of events like the AMP Convention. It could also be in the initiatives that you come up on your own, that serves an unmet need in the community. I have seen many of such initiatives mushrooming over the years. All these efforts, big or small, will contribute to the success of our community, *insya Allah*.

Our Appreciation

Ladies and gentlemen, before we begin our discussions for the day, let me also take this opportunity to record my appreciation for our Guest of Honour, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr Lawrence Wong, who will be joining us later in the afternoon.

I would also like to thank our donors and sponsors for their generous contribution. In particular, I would like to thank Salleh Marican Foundation and CIMB, our Diamond sponsors for this Convention. My appreciation also goes out to our panel members who have been integral to the planning of the Convention. They have worked tirelessly, helping us to research, plan, guide and strategise the content for the Convention. They are the ones who have generously shared their intellect and expertise to enable the rich discussions that will take place today. Finally, I would also like to thank our staff who form the backbone of AMP and this Convention, providing support to the Convention panels and who are working hard to ensure today's event impacts our community positively.

With that, I look forward to the honest, frank and thought-provoking discussions later. I am sure you are too. It is my hope that you will find the AMP Convention a useful platform for us to learn from each other and work with each other to strategise for our community.

Thank you.