

**WELCOME REMARKS BY MR ZAINUDIN NORDIN CHAIRMAN,
ONEPEOPLE.SG AT THE JOINT ONEPEOPLE.SG AND SELF –
HELP GROUPS NATIONAL DAY OBSERVANCE CEREMONY &
IFTAR ON SATURDAY, 3 AUGUST 2013 AT ONEPEOPLE.SG, HALL
OF TRUST**

Good Evening

Assoc Prof Dr Yaacob Ibrahim
Minister for Communications and Information and Minister in charge of
Muslim Affairs

Parliamentary Colleagues

Chiefs of the Self–Help Groups

Community and Religious Leaders

Distinguished Guests and Friends

I would like to warmly welcome you to today's event – a community gathering to celebrate our nation's 48th birthday, as well as to join hands with our Muslim friends in the breaking of fast. This gathering presents an excellent opportunity for all of us to meet, rekindle old ties, and bring forth the message of peace.

2 Today's event is an excellent example of the close co-operation between OnePeople.sg and the Self-Help Groups. While the Self–Help Groups cater to the needs of their respective ethnic groups, they play an integral role working together with OnePeople.sg to reach out to all

Singaporeans, championing the cause of racial and religious harmony. And it is with such support that OnePeople.sg is able to carry out its initiatives, working hand in hand with community stakeholders such as the Community Development Councils , People's Association as well as passionate individuals. As a ground up organisation, we look towards being the voice of harmony by deepening engagement with youths, building capacity of community and religious leaders and providing research and resource expertise to strengthen race and religious relations.

3 As part of our efforts, OnePeople.sg recently embarked on a joint study with the Institute of Policy Studies to develop Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony and gauge where we stand on racial and religious relations in Singapore. The survey of over 4,000 people showed there is cause for celebration. The study clearly demonstrates that Singaporeans value multiracialism. Minorities feel equally treated when it comes to the use of public services. Singaporeans understand that we can learn from different racial and religious groups. And though we may have witnessed ugly incidents of racism recently, generally, most Singaporeans do not feel inter-racial or inter-religious tension in their daily lives. This is a testament of how far we have come as a multi-racial and multi-religious society. It goes to show the hard work that has

been put in by community stakeholders like yourselves and ground up institutions, working side by side with the government to keep multiracialism alive in Singapore.

4 While the results of the study are encouraging, there are some gaps which we have to pay close attention to. There is more we can do to put racial and religious harmony in practice such as having close friends from a different race or religion, taking an interest in the cultures of others and looking at minority perceptions at workplaces, especially when it comes to top jobs. The study provides in essence, a framework for all of us to leverage on to address concerns and bridge gaps.

5 While we have accomplished much, we cannot take this harmonious state of affairs for granted. Sustaining racial and religious harmony should be a continued effort by every individual. Today's gathering gives all of us an opportunity to learn more about another's beliefs, culture and way of life. This should continue in various walks of our lives. It is through such interactions, we foster mutual understanding and respect. Above all, these shared celebrations affirm that despite our different cultures and religions, we all share a common home called Singapore.

6 On this note, I wish all Muslims a Blessed Ramadan and everyone a happy and meaningful National Day.

Thank you.