

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT HALIMAH YACOB
AT THE 5th SINGAPORE WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME
INDUCTION CEREMONY AND GALA DINNER
ON SATURDAY, 24 MARCH 2018, 7PM,
AT THE SHANGRI-LA HOTEL**

Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal,
Senior Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Social and Family Development

Dr June Goh,
President of the Singapore Council of
Women's Organisations (SCWO)

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. Good evening everyone, it is my pleasure to join you at SCWO's gala dinner today.

2. Let me begin by thanking the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO) and the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame (SWHF) for bringing us together to celebrate International Women's Day. This is a good opportunity for us to reflect on the advancements

women have made over the years, as well as our current challenges and how we can further progress in future.

Great strides made by women in Singapore

3. SCWO has done good work and, over the years, contributed towards the progression of women in Singapore. In line with the ideals of Equal Space, Equal Voice and Equal Worth for women in Singapore, SCWO has continually catered your initiatives and service to the changing needs of women.

4. Today, I would especially like to commend its efforts in recognising and empowering women through the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame is a very meaningful platform to recognise outstanding women and their achievements in the various fields. Through this, it reminds us of the remarkable potential of women and what they can achieve.

5. This evening, we are gathered here to celebrate the achievements of twelve outstanding women, who have contributed significantly to nation building and towards the progress of women in Singapore. They are the fifth batch of inductees, and they will join the ranks of the 140 women already inducted into the Hall of Fame.

6. One such inductee is Puan Noor Aishah, spouse of Encik Yusof Ishak. After primary school, Puan Noor Aishah learnt to cook and sew to supplement her family's income. She then peddled nasi lemak with her mother and took orders for embroidery to make up for the lack of formal education. When Encik Yusof Ishak became the Yang di-Pertuan Negara in 1959, Puan Noor Aishah graciously adapted to the role of being the spouse of the Head of State. She breathed new life into the Istana by teaching the cooks some of her favourite recipes like Beef Rendang. She organised tea sessions for dignitaries and made contributions to society through her involvement in voluntary organisations. Puan Noor Aishah carried out her official and

ceremonial duties with quiet determination, humility and charm. It is my pleasure to acknowledge her contributions to Singapore today.

7. Other than Puan Noor Aishah, we are here today to honour the achievements of Daisy Devan, Phyllis Tan and Geraldene Low-Ismael, who were female pioneers in the fields of business; law; and arts, culture, entertainment and media, respectively. Without Miranda Yap and Yang Chang Man, Singapore's biology industry would not have thrived the way it is today. I also thank Anastasia Liew for her dedication in baking the best pandan cakes in Singapore, and Claire Chiang for her commitment to corporate social responsibility. Congratulations, all of you have done very well in your various fields.

8. Among the Hall of Fame inductees, there are also many women who had achieved success despite facing various challenges. At a time when women were told they belong to the private sphere of the home, Tan Teck Neo, Grace Yin, Zena Tessensohn and Mozelle Nissim swam against the tide to set up organisations focused on

women, helping the vulnerable and the marginalised. They are trailblazers who had paved and led the way for future generations of women. Their efforts to chart the discourse of women's place in the society many, many years ago have helped scatter the seeds of courage and perseverance, which have slowly blossomed into what we see today – strong and influential women who thrive in their areas of work.

9. All our inductees are inspiring role models for our young girls and women, in addition to the 140 women who have already been inducted into the Hall of Fame before today. I am confident that their stories will encourage our younger generation to achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

10. It is my honour to share this evening with remarkable women like Puan Noor Aishah and the other Hall of Fame inductees, who have all contributed to the success of Singapore in their own ways.

Thank you for demonstrating that it is possible to live a life which is fuelled by passion, perseverance and a spirit of excellence.

11. Please join me to give the inductees, especially those present with us today, a big round of applause.

12. Thank you.