

A new beginning:

Connecting Malaysians and sharing our future.

Preamble

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to Penang in my capacity as the Chief Minister of Penang from the DAP and Pakatan Rakyat, something that had not been possible for a long time until the great people of Penang gave us the mandate on 8th March 2008.

As the Secretary-General, I welcome all DAP national delegates, observers and members; leaders of Pakatan Rakyat component parties; diplomats and ambassadors, consul-generals and members of consular corps; members of civil society; members of the media and all other guests and participants to the 16th DAP National Congress.

This Congress will set the party's direction and elect a new leadership for the next three years. But, more importantly, as we anticipate the 13th General Election to be held within the next hundred days, we gather here today to ponder upon the future of Malaysia.

We come together filled with pride in what the 150,000 DAP members (from 84,000 in 2008) throughout Malaysia have achieved, with gratitude for the sacrifices and contributions of our veterans; and with a determination to honour them through our work to replace a corrupt regime with Pakatan Rakyat to forge a new beginning for Malaysia.

Tributes

The number of delegates qualified for this Congress is three times more than those qualified for the 15th Congress on 23rd and 24th August 2008, from 948 to 2,576. Organisationally, the party has expanded with the number of registered branches increased from 311 in 2008 to 1128 since the 15th Congress in 2008.

On behalf of the party, I welcome all our new members who have recently joined the party with hopes of bringing change to our beloved nation. In turn, I want you to join me to thank the veterans who had sacrificed so much over so long to fight the lonely battle against all odds.

I would not be able name all those leaders and members whose indefatigable spirit always inspire us by keeping the Rocket flag flying all over Malaysia, including places where we have never won before. This Party Congress applauds the contributions of our veterans especially those who have joined the party for more than 35 years. A small memento of appreciation will be given to them in recognition of their service and loyalty.

Now we have a sizable member-base from the Kadazan, Dusun and Murut communities in Sabah, both men and women, several whom are with us all today to do a short performance and to sing Ubah in Kadazan and Gangnam style. I am impressed by the youth and quality of our Sabah members, including native women. Our Sabah members will play a significant role in delivering an increased number of seats in the next general elections and I wish you all “Umohon!”

We also have many new members from Sarawak, including those from the Dayak community. I am confident that we can improve on the two parliament seats we currently hold in the state, including winning all of the urban areas in Sarawak and sending at least one Dayak DAP representative to parliament after GE13. At a DAP ceramah in Serian, we were impressed by the 2,000 crowd of which 80% were Bidayuh, the largest such turnout amongst natives in DAP history. Here, I want to acknowledge the good work of the Dayak Consultative Council (DCC) and the Sarawak DAP in highlighting and bringing to the forefront issues important to Sarawakians and the Dayak community. To our Iban brothers and sisters, let us Ngap Sayot!

In Johor, we have received strong response that has never been seen before. We can feel the winds of change blowing every time I visit the state and I am confident that we will significantly improve on the 1 parliament and 4 state seats which we won in 2008.

I am also encouraged by the formation of the first Perlis state committee under Sdr Teh Seng Chuan. Although Perlis is a small state, DAP has to play an important role in the state if Pakatan Rakyat is to capture Perlis.

I would also like to congratulate Wanita DAP for holding their inaugural elections last week, and I am confident that the wing will continue to thrive under the newly-elected leadership led by Sdri Chong Eng. I would also like to commend DAPSY for a mature contest in their national congress which

was jointly held with Wanita DAP. The new DAPSY leadership under Sdr Teo Kok Seong will certainly inspire our youth to climb greater heights.

I would also like to single out the amendment made to the DAPSY constitution by former DAPSY chief Sdr Anthony Loke that has lowered the age limit of members from 40 to 35, which will ensure that our youth wing would be led by young leaders, and not old leaders who think they are still young. This makes DAPSY a youth organisation with one of the lowest maximum age limits, and makes DAP a party of the young addressing the fact that 72 percent of Malaysians are below 40 years old while 48 percent are below 25 years old.

I want all of us to remember this: that it is not the number of members, not the might of raw power nor money that count in politics. Those may be the essential elements Barisan Nasional politics. But in DAP politics, it is our principles, our ideas, and our ideals that count. Remember – it is our moral compass that defines and distinguishes DAP from Barisan Nasional parties.

I can attest proudly that in my 5 years as Penang Chief Minister no party member has ever sought special favours or contracts from me. Unlike BN, DAP members contribute tirelessly and selflessly because we believe in a DAP that can bring about a better Malaysia.

That is the basic difference between them and us. We are prepared to sacrifice for what we stand for. Indeed, many of us were persecuted for what we believe in. Sdr Teoh Beng Hock even died while serving the party and the people. Whether the party wins one seat or 100 seats, we are always ready to struggle to ensure that ordinary Malaysians get a better deal from the government they elect.

The State of the Party

Before the 2008 general election, DAP always lost out on the politics of race and religion to BN. UMNO projected an extreme form of racism and religious exclusion that drowned out rational voices supporting DAP's superior policies. MCA, MIC, SUPP and Gerakan pandered to the same racist and extremist fears in gaining non-Malay support with a twist – that there must be some non-Malay representation or else the already-marginalised non-Malays would be completely left out and abandoned.

The game-changer came in the 2008 general elections when the people realised that they were cheated and robbed blind. UMNO's racism and extremism was a mask to justify corruption and abuse of power. Malays suddenly realised that it was not the non-Malays that was robbing them blind but UMNO leaders. Of RM 54 billion shares given out, no ordinary Malays owned a single share, all monopolised by UMNO leaders and their cronies. To date only RM2 billion bumi shares remain and there is no full accounting for the missing RM52 billion bumi shares scandal.

Similarly, non-Malays realised that non-Malay representation in government did nothing for them except to enrich themselves. If non-Malays wanted to get some business transaction done, it was more effective to get the help of UMNO cronies. Whether MCA, MIC, Gerakan or SUPP was in Cabinet was irrelevant. These parties would never give up their Ministerial posts; just look at SUPP still clinging on to their Ministerial posts despite promising to leave the Sarawak state cabinet.

Despite the hardship and difficulties, DAP never gave up. We were rewarded in the 2008 general election when DAP helped form state governments in Penang, Selangor, Perak, Kedah and Kelantan with Pakatan Rakyat. We were able to achieve the following:

- a. Greater gender inclusiveness. DAP fielded 19 female candidates nation-wide, 14 of them elected.
- b. Greater multi-ethnic inclusiveness. Nearly thirty percent of our candidates were ethnic Indians and 7 of them were elected MPs and 12 as State Assemblymen. To those who keep maliciously painting DAP as a mono-ethnic party, we want to tell them that the DAP has more ethnic Indian elected representatives than MIC.
- c. New generation. A third of DAP's candidates were of the age of 30 or below. Among our elected representatives, more than a third are under 40 when they were elected in 2008.
- d. Broadening of DAP's appeal. Estimates show that our candidates have obtained averagely 20 percent or higher of Malay votes in urban centres.

Moving forward, DAP aspires to be known for the following:

- a. A truly Malaysian party with a significant presence in every state in Malaysia.
- b. In the last four years since the 15th Congress, we have made significant inroads with the Kadazan, Dusun and Murut communities in Sabah as well as the Dayak community in Sarawak.
- c. The DAP also wishes to be the party of choice for the Indians and Malays.
- d. The party that has the best ideas and policies. DAP aspires to be the natural party of choice for all Malaysians by leading from the front. For instance, DAP aspires to be Malaysia's first green party and Penang is Malaysia's first green state with no plastic bag campaigns and the highest recycling rate of 26% in 2012 when the national target is 20% by 2020.
- e. The party that is youth-friendly and that champions women's rights.
- f. The party that allies with civil society – like Bersih for clean elections and Himpunan Hijau against Lynas.

DAP takes pride in its growth and expansion which was conducted with full collaboration with our leaders and members as well as our partners in Pakatan Rakyat, PKR and PAS. We have proven to be true and loyal partners to PAS and PKR. DAP hopes that our loyalty is recognised by allowing DAP to contest more seats at the next General Elections. We aim for 3 extra parliamentary seats and 10 state seats in Peninsular Malaysia whilst Sabah and Sarawak are handling the seat negotiations on their own.

However, the success in the expansion of the party would mean nothing if we do not remain united. The nation's eyes are before us as we dare to hold party elections just before the General Elections. Let us prove to the nation that after party elections, win or lose, DAP leaders and members must stay united as one mind, one soul, one spirit and one team to help PR defeat BN.

Performance of State Governments

BN claims that Malaysia will go bankrupt if PR comes to power. Our sterling performance of record budget surpluses and debt reduction in PR states that was commended by the Auditor-General's report is the best answer.

DAP can take some pride in our record in the state governments in Penang and Selangor topping investment charts in Malaysia with a combined RM50 billion from 2009-11, equivalent to 36% or more than 1/3rd of total investments in the entire country during this period.

DAP can also take pride in the fact that both state governments in Penang and Selangor have introduced important legislative reforms and governance measures such as Freedom of Information (FOI) Act which allows for greater public access to state government-related documents.

The Penang state government is actively pursuing options to hold local government elections by passing the historic Penang Local Government Elections Enactment while the Selangor state government has experimented with holding elections for the post of “ketua kampung” in three Chinese new villages. Penang recently introduced a historic anti-hopping constitutional amendment bill to prevent the trading of elected representatives and Selangor became the first state legislature to name an opposition BN state representative as the head of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Penang is the most liveable city in Malaysia since 2011 and recently attracted the building two Exhibition and Convention Centres and a theme park for the first time in 50 years. Both Penang and Selangor also invested in building affordable housing, with Penang’s RM500 million fund utilised to engage HDB Singapore to ensure that the best affordable housing in Singapore will also be made available in Penang.

Clearly PR can govern well and deserves to win and rule Malaysia.

Pakatan Rakyat

The triple challenges of our time are, first, to keep Pakatan Rakyat intact amidst numerous attempts to break up Pakatan Rakyat; two, to win the next general election; and, thirdly, to bring forth a new Malaysia when Pakatan Rakyat wins power at the federal level. Failure at each of the challenges means Malaysia remains stagnant if not decline further.

The mandate DAP is seeking from Malaysian voters is to serve as a responsible coalition partner in government together with Parti KeADILan Rakyat and Parti Islam SeMalaysia within the Pakatan Rakyat framework

to realise the common agenda set forth in the Common Policy Platform and Buku Jingga.

We urge all leaders, members and supporters of DAP, PKR and PAS to focus on winning Middle Malaysia and champion the agreed common agenda of Pakatan Rakyat for a new Malaysia. Pakatan Rakyat must win the majority of the 2.9 million first-time voters as well as other swing voters. Without winning the 4 million middle ground voters, there would not be a new Pakatan Rakyat Federal Government.

Nearly 3 years ago at DAP National Conference in Ipoh on 17th January 2010, I discussed the concept of “Middle Malaysia”. It was held during the height of the controversies over the use of the term “Allah” by non-Muslims which was exploited by extremist groups with the aim of splitting Pakatan Rakyat.

I am glad that Pakatan Rakyat not only survived but continues to thrive. Now MCA attempts to paint PAS as imposing Islamic law on non-Muslims such as khalwat which is untrue. On the hair salon issue, this is an administrative problem that is being resolved. DAP hopes that these summonses imposed on hair salon female operators for cutting hair on male non-Muslims will be cancelled to prove that PAS can ensure justice to non-Muslims. Failure to do so will make it difficult for PAS and Pakatan Rakyat to have an impact in Johor in the 13th GE.

DAP defended Islam when MCA attacked Islam as being linked to corruption and poverty. DAP defended Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tok Guru Nik Aziz against lies by MCA that he condoned Muslim men to rape non-Muslim women. UMNO, New Straits Times and Utusan Malaysia continue to label DAP as anti-Islam and anti-Malay even though it is MCA who belittled the PAS female candidate in the Tenang by-election for refusing to shake hands with men.

When the Penang state government increased the allocation to Islamic affairs by 300% in the state, BN Penang Chief Teng Chang Yeow openly accused the state government of going down the road of greater Islamisation when this is based on needs and past neglect by the previous state government. Why is Teng not anti-Islam when Teng allows MCA to question why the state government acquires Chinese land for a cemetery, when again this is based on needs? This is similar to UMNO questioning increased allocations given to Chinese, Tamil, missionary schools, putting

up bilingual road signs and the setting up of the non-Muslims Religious Affairs EXCO portfolio. Did Utusan have the guts to accuse Gerakan of being anti-Islam?

DAP will not take the extreme position of BN. It is crucial to note that there is only one middle ground in Malaysian politics, and it is the middle ground that matters. Make no mistake that Middle Malaysia will decide which coalition will govern next. To embrace Middle Malaysia, Pakatan Rakyat must be seen as moderate and inclusive, and distance and differentiate ourselves from our exclusive, racist and extremist opponents.

In this context, it is important note that in The Shah Alam Declaration adopted at the National Conference, DAP reaffirms our commitment:

- a. To defend the system of Parliamentary Democracy and Constitutional Monarchy with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong as the Head of State and constitutional monarchies for the states; and committed to upholding the Federal Constitution as the supreme law of the land and to honour it in the spirit of the Merdeka Constitution 1957 and the Malaysia Agreement 1963.
- b. To preserve the special position of the Malays and Bumiputeras while protecting the legitimate rights of other races as enshrined in Article 153 of the Federal Constitution.
- c. To safeguard the position of Islam as the religion of the Federation while simultaneously upholding the freedom of other religions to be practiced in peace and harmony, as enshrined in Article 3 and 11 of the Federal Constitution.
- d. To dignify Bahasa Melayu as the National Language as enshrined in Article 152 of the Federal Constitution, while encouraging the use and study of English and mother tongues in order to create a society that excels through language diversity.
- e. To recognise the spirit of equal partnership inherent in the Malaysia Agreement 1963 and champion the rights of the people of Sabah and Sarawak.

The Last Mile

We are facing the final 100 days countdown to the 13th general election. Either we bid farewell to Malaysia's Ancien Régime, the longest-serving elected government in the world, or else allow BN to steal our children's future as they have stolen ours.

Our mission is not just to defeat a corrupt BN but also a racist and extremist UMNO, an immoral and unethical MCA, a Gerakan that does not possess any courage or conviction, and an MIC that has no direction and leads only from behind.

Ekonomi Setiakawan

Democratisation needs to happen in the economy as well. An inclusive economy built upon the principles of setiakawan (solidarity) creates opportunities for people who work hard to have a good quality of life, for their families to live with dignity and to ensure the weak are taken care of so that no one is left behind.

As far as the Malaysian economy is concerned, we need to take cognizance of the following contradictions:

- a. That Malaysia achieved middle income status in 1992 and has been caught in the middle-income trap for the last 20 years.
- b. Malaysia's Gini coefficient shows that it is the second most unequal society in Asia. 60 percent of the population live with a monthly household income of not more than RM3,000; can you imagine that 60 percent of the families in the country qualify for Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia? Doesn't Barisan Nasional see that something is fundamentally wrong which needs to be corrected with broader policy reforms and not just a RM500 gift?
- c. According to a World Bank report, a million Malaysians – mostly highly skilled and educated – have left Malaysia to work in other countries, while in exchange for this brain drain, Malaysia is the host country for 1.5 million documented foreign unskilled labour and many more undocumented foreign workers.
- d. Further, the oil-producing states of Sabah, Sarawak, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang are also among the poorest states.

It is crucial for a new Pakatan Rakyat Federal Government with DAP as a coalition partner to champion an economic philosophy that not merely serves cronies but is in solidarity with the 99 percent majority, so as to create a sharing society. Our positions on an economy that is based on the solidarity principle:

- a. Recognise corruption as the most important obstacle for the Malaysian economy to move to the next level. To eliminate the culture of corruption prevalent in BN's Malaysia by implementing 6 integrity steps and making the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission entirely independent with powers of prosecution. The 6 integrity measures of fighting corruption are:
 - o Instituting public declaration of assets of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.
 - o Implementing open competitive tenders which have saved and helped us earn at least RM1 billion during these last 5 years in Penang.
 - o Bar family members from involvement in government contracts.
 - o Protect genuine whistleblowers.
 - o Remove leaders with extravagant lifestyles.
 - o Come clean on political donations.

Under PR, Malaysia will be in the top 30 rankings (as compared to No. 54 at 2012) of Transparency International Corruption Perception Index by the end of our first term.

- b. To endorse the common economic policies of Pakatan Rakyat outlined in The Common Policy Platform, Buku Jingga and Pakatan Rakyat Alternative Budgets, which focuses on uplifting the household income of the bottom 60 percent to boost domestic demand and hence the national economy as a whole.
- c. Key policies include a minimum wage policy, reducing the influx of unskilled foreign labour; abolishing monopolies and cronyism; transparency; abolition of the North-South Highway toll and better provisions of essential government services (public health, public housing, public transport, education, utilities and infrastructure).

- d. To support the Equitable Economic Agenda (Agenda Ekonomi Saksama) framework of the PR state governments that aims to abolish poverty, narrow the wealth and income gaps, end corruption, cronyism and nepotism, and provide equal opportunities, as well as genuinely assist the weakest in the society. If Penang can abolish poverty by 2013, 5 years after taking power, why can't BN do so after 55 years in power?
- e. To call for greater support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and small and medium industries (SMIs) through support for market access, research and development grants, tax exemptions, grants and aid for the industries to upgrade in terms of technology and skills; and to conduct a full revamp of the Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri to end hostile and aggressive tax raids on SMEs/SMIs.
- f. To end the unfair distribution of oil revenues by increasing oil production shares from the present 5% to 20%, which will assist in upgrading and building new infrastructure in Sabah and Sarawak. Stop the land grabs in Sabah and Sarawak to ensure that the native population retains their inherent native customary rights over their ancestral land. Ensure a massive effort to help the poorer communities in Sabah and Sarawak including wiping out poverty by the end of our first term. And to demand the end of the cabotage policy in Sabah and Sarawak that has been one of the causes of high consumer prices.

Promises Unfulfilled

Arresting the decline in educational standards is crucial if Malaysia is to succeed in transforming itself into a high-income, high value-added and developed economy. The recently released Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) 2011 report, showed that Malaysia has fallen from 20th to 26th in the Mathematics and from 21st to 32nd in Science. Our average math score fell by 34 points from 474 in 2007 to 440 in 2011. Our average science score fell by even more, 45 points, from 471 in 2007 to 426 in 2011. The results are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Fall in Malaysia's TIMMs ranking and average score in Science and Math, 2007 to 2011

Ranking	2007 Ranking	2011 Ranking	Fall in Ranking
Math	20	26	6
Science	21	32	11
Average score	2007 Average score	2011 Average score	Fall in Average score
Math	474	440	34
Science	471	426	45

And yet our Minister of Education, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin dares to claim that we have a better education system than the US, UK and Germany!

Malaysia's ranking in Math fell from 20th in 2007 to 26th in 2011 while our ranking in Science fell by an ever greater margin, from 21st in 2007 to 32nd in 2011. Our average Math scores fell from 474 in 2007 to 440 and our average Science score fell by an even greater degree from 471 in 2007 to 426 in 2011.

In contrast, the US and the UK were ranked 9th and 10th with an average Math score of 509 and 507 respectively, far ahead of Malaysia.

Tan Sri Muhyiddin's promise of improving our education standards remains unfulfilled. The latest 2011 TIMSS results only confirms the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study that our students are 3 years behind the international average and half of our students do not have an aptitude and command of knowledge of Science and Math.

For Malaysia to succeed in transforming into a developed economy, a prerequisite is a strong base in science and technology.

Another promise unfulfilled is BN's promise that the license for the Lynas rare earth plant would be revoked if Lynas fails to ship out or export their toxic residue.

BN now has a good reason to shut down the rare earth plant without paying a single cent in compensation because Lynas has breached a fundamental condition. By failing to fulfil their promise to shut down their plant, BN has shown that they are willing to risk and even mortgage our health and safety of our children in the mindless pursuit of profits at all costs.

Another promise unfulfilled is to resolve long-standing problem of Stateless Malaysians who are mainly Indians.

The Penang state government has adopted the practical approach to appoint 5 experienced registration officers to help the applicants fill in their forms. This respect for Indians is reflected by the yearly allocation to not only Tamil schools but also funds to set up kindergartens there, the opening of the first government building granted to the Hindu Endowment Board, the yearly RM1 million allocation to the Hindu Endowment Board, granting of land to Hindu Temples and Tamil schools, and the completion after 10 years of the largest Murugan Temple outside India at Waterfall Temple.

Conclusion

We believe in Malaysia because of the courage you, the DAP members displayed, committed to the best of what Malaysia represents – one nation united in freedom, justice, democracy, truth and welfare to its people. These are the values we stood up for, under the most trying of tests, persevering not just when it was easy, but when it was hard.

The road towards Putrajaya will be harder still because BN and UMNO will ensure the dirtiest elections in Malaysian history by relying on lies, fear and threats to win by hook or by crook. Until now, the Prime Minister has refused to accept a peaceful transfer of power should PR win the next General Elections.

DAP seeks a new beginning for Malaysia based on trust and connecting with each other as Malaysians on common principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings. And most importantly to share our future together by sharing our common

aspirations – to live in peace and security; to get an education and to work with dignity; to love our families, our communities, and our God.

I know there are many – Muslim and non-Muslim – who question whether we can forge this new beginning. In their quest to retain power, BN has exploited race and religion over the last 55 years by appealing to our worst sentiments in our nature instead of appealing to the best virtues in our national character. There is much fear and much mistrust towards each other as there is towards change. But if we choose to be bound by the past, we will never move forward.

We do have our differences in culture, religion and racial backgrounds. However, if we allow our relationship to be defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, who make us smaller rather than help us reach for the stars, and who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. We must respect our differences as a gift created by God to allow unity in diversity.

DAP believes that all people yearn for the ability to speak their mind and have a say in how they are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people. Governments that protect these rights are people-centric governments with respect for all their people. We do not believe in “you help me, I help you” government, which only implement projects when support is given. Instead, DAP believes in a government that helps the people all the time regardless whether or not support is given as it is the fundamental duty of a democratic government.

A people-centric government requires that power must be exercised through consent, not coercion; through integrity not bribery; you must respect the rights of minorities, and participate with a spirit of tolerance and compromise; you must prioritise education, housing and health over 100 storey-towers and nuclear reactors; youths and women must be respected by giving them decision-making powers and wiping out poverty is more important than being the top shopping destination in the world.

It's time. Ini kali lah. Let us all believe in the power of change. If we dare to create history and change for the first time in 55 years, greatness for every one of you is before us.

The next General Elections is not about the fate of political parties. It is about the destiny of the nation. It is not about which leader wins or loses, it is about you, whether you have the courage to change to remake Malaysia towards a new beginning by connecting with each other as Malaysians: Malay, Dayak, Indian, Iban and Chinese; male or female; senior citizens or youths to share a prosperous future together.

A Malaysia that is clean, green, safe and healthy. Let change come to Malaysia. Perubahan di Tanganmu.

*DAP berikrar setiakawan Malaysia
Adil ditegak, rakyat dijaga,
Ubah kerajaan berjiwa rakyat
Yg bersih, hijau, sihat dan selamat*

UBAH SEKARANG, SELAMATKAN MALAYSIA.

Speech By Lim Guan Eng during DAP's National Congress on Saturday, 15
December 2012