

# Building A New Malaysia For All

## **Preamble**

May I first welcome all DAP National Delegates, top leaders of Pakatan Harapan and other guests present at this very historic, meaningful and important occasion.

Today's DAP National Conference is the first gathering of our National Delegates, the highest decision-making body of the DAP, since Pakatan Harapan won the 14th General Election on 9th May 2018. DAP delegates should feel proud to have contributed towards the first change of government in 61 years and to be part of this New Malaysia.

The DAP was founded on 18th March 1966. For a long time, our party was seen as a "permanent opposition party" until the 12th General Election in 2008, when the then Pakatan Rakyat won more than one third of the seats in Parliament and captured five state governments.

That was a decade ago. On 9 May 2018, after 52 years of very difficult and often painful struggle that the DAP and our Pakatan Harapan allies managed to topple Barisan Nasional for the first time in Malaysia's history since Merdeka in 1957. Thanks to the people of Malaysia, Pakatan Harapan is now the Federal government and in 8 state governments.

On behalf of the party and the people of Malaysia, I would like to thank all past DAP leaders and members, especially Sdr. Dr. Chan Man Hin, our Founder-Chairman, the late Sdr. Karpal Singh, our esteemed Chairman, and our inspirational icon Sdr Lim Kit Siang, for their steadfastness through all the trials and tribulations, facing the harshest of persecution and for their perseverance even at the darkest of time.

## **From permanent opposition to a partner in power**

Since its inception, DAP has been a party of ideals and ideas in Malaysian politics. During the "permanent opposition phase", DAP held the ruling government accountable on behalf of the taxpayers and ensured that Malaysia celebrates multi-ethnic and multi-religious differences as strength rather than weakness.

After suffering crushing defeats in 1995, 1999 and 2004 general elections, upon taking over as Secretary-General in 2004, I told the party to aspire not to be the largest opposition party but to winning power with our electoral allies, which was then seen an impossible dream. I stressed that DAP's political ambition should not be limited to be the best opposition party in Malaysia but to also demonstrate that our political coalition can govern better than BN.

4 years later in the 2008 general elections, we won 5 states and denied BN its 2/3 super-majority for the first time in Malaysian history. After the 12th General Election, I told the 2008 National Congress that DAP aspired to be a "responsible partner in power" based on the tenets of democracy, justice, rule of law, integrity, human dignity and freedom.

Two core messages, both true then and now, are:

First, the DAP wishes to be a partner in power not for power sake, not for money, not for self-gratification, but for a better Malaysia that we can all be proud of, on behalf of the people and for the people, inspired by shared ideals of social democracy.

Second, the DAP has been very clear that we would only be in power through coalition building as well as being a responsible coalition partner. No party can rule alone in Malaysia.

### **The Political Coalitions that saved Malaysia**

We succeeded in proving in Penang and Selangor that our political coalition can rule better than BN. But can we convince Malaysians? On 9th May 2018, against all odds, millions of Malaysians stood up against the kleptocratic Najib Razak regime and miraculously voted for change.

We have three political giants in Malaysian politics to thank for making change possible.

Since his sacking as Deputy Prime Minister in 1998, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has been the glue to hold the then opposition parties together through Barisan Alternatif, Pakatan Rakyat and Pakatan Harapan. The past twenty years have been a long journey. The base vote and ground prepared by the original parties of Pakatan Harapan – Parti Keadilan Rakyat, Parti Amanah Negara and DAP were crucial.

However, the original Pakatan Harapan parties would not have won without the leadership of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and the realignment with Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia. For that we thank Tun Dr. Mahathir for his courage and judgment to strike out a new political path, unimagined previously when the BN kleptocracy was seen as invincible.

We also thank Sdr. Lim Kit Siang for making the difficult but very important realignment with Tun Dr. Mahathir possible against the sentiments of the entire party. Kit Siang had the foresight and courage in March 2016 to advocate a grand coalition with forces aligned with Tun Dr. Mahathir. Kit Siang is the rare statesman not fixated with the past but focused on the future to chart a new course of history.

We must also not forget the role played by Allahyarham Tok Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat who consistently protected Pakatan against conservative forces within his own party and those racists and extremists outside. Sadly his death has allowed the racists and extremists to gain ascendancy. Building on Tok Guru's legacy, Sdr. Mohamad Sabu and others made a major sacrifice to leave PAS and form Parti Amanah Negara, under severe duress and incessant attacks.

We would also like to acknowledge the leadership of Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail for helping to hold the coalition together for 9th May 2018 to happen. Also, the contributions of NGOs and BERSIH in establishing a participatory platform for many Malaysians to gain political consciousness about the need for reforms. GE14 was all about people's power.

For the victory to happen, Pakatan Harapan went through major and previously unthinkable game changers:

- The original parties (Keadilan, DAP and Amanah) realigned with forces linked to Tun Dr Mahathir, and made him chairman of Pakatan Harapan on 14th July 2017;
- On 7th January 2018, Pakatan Harapan announced Tun Dr Mahathir as the prime minister candidate with Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah as deputy prime minister candidate, and Datuk Seri Anwar to be made the eighth prime minister candidate;
- On that same day, as a result of negotiations for the prime minister candidate, Pakatan Harapan also announced the completion of seat negotiations of parliamentary seats in the Peninsula;
- On 6th April 2018, in the name of solidarity, Pakatan Harapan agreed to use Keadilan symbol as the single common logo for GE14.

The Najib administration had done everything it could to thwart Pakatan Harapan's attempt to create history. The previous regime had enacted a fake news law, did a last-minute constituency re-delineation of election boundary that heavily favoured BN, decided on a Wednesday polling day, put a tighter leash of mass media and used government machinery as propaganda tools, manufactured three-corner fights with PAS to split opposition votes, attempted to deregister DAP and actually suspended Bersatu, used money politics, fear and threats.

Yet, Malaysians decided that enough was enough. All advantages built in for the then ruling coalition were neutralised by the people's movement.

9th May 2018 was a peaceful uprising of the people. Again, to DAP leaders and members, Pakatan Harapan allies and all Malaysians who struggle and labour to bring change, we must not forget the people who contributed to this peaceful revolution.

### **Building the nation together – the harder part**

This reminder is important that 9th May 2018 is not about us, not about DAP not about Pakatan, but about the people, especially those who voted for us. A year later after GE14, it seems to many that winning was the easier part. Building a New Malaysia together is the harder task we have to endeavour together with patience and perseverance.

As a member of the Pakatan Harapan coalition, DAP must focus on national unity; shared prosperity that provides equal opportunities in jobs, education and business; clean government and fighting corruption; respecting rule of law and justice for all; good governance that is people-centric and performance-oriented; and protecting the environment and the basic human rights of every Malaysian to live with dignity. Providing for food, shelter and clothing is no longer enough. We must also provide education, employment and business opportunities as well as a prosperous future we can believe in.

Indeed, we are facing many challenges especially on the narrative of national unity that is confronted by irresponsible elements that seeks to divide and disrupt the PH government through the politics of racism and religious extremism. Exploiting hate and confrontational politics is a weak attempt to hide their inability to competently manage the economy until their

state government is practically bankrupt and salaries cannot even be paid, or hide their corruption on an industrial scale until Malaysia is declared a global kleptocracy.

We cannot fight hatred with hatred but must rely on facts and reason. Only by turning around the economy and ensure economic prosperity for all can we win and defeat these dangerous forces who wish to split Malaysia by turning Malays against non-Malays and Muslims against non-Muslims. We have achieved that in Penang when UMNO and PAS was reduced to only 3 Assemblypersons and can do so again nationally by treating all equally, including increasing allocation for Islam and also vernacular schools as well as CAT administration based on Competency Accountability and Transparency.

I would like to speak very candidly about the challenges we face and the duty of rebuilding Malaysia, a New Malaysia for all.

First, Malaysians voted against the kleptocrats but we have to humbly accept that for many who voted for us it was not a full endorsement of Pakatan Harapan. We still need to do everything possible to prove ourselves as a far better government to earn the people's support in the coming elections. The same knife cuts bread and fingers, or in Chinese 水能载舟、亦能覆舟 – the voters who ousted our opponents may do the same to us.

Second, we were voted in through a highly participatory people's campaign and movement. As a government, we will have to be inclusive and allow public participation by creating a larger democratic space through new institutions such as a more democratic parliamentary committees, public consultation and hearing.

Third, many voted against the previous government out of economic frustrations. Therefore, shared prosperity should be the primary and principal objective of New Malaysia. We need to listen and empathise with the economic concerns of ordinary Malaysians while thinking ahead so to offer long-term genuine solutions and not just short-term quick fixes.

Much as the public want us to resolve problems of the next two weeks, the state of the Malaysian economy is the outcome of decisions made in the last twenty or 61 years. No matter how hard we try, problems from 61 years back cannot be solved in 1 year. Instead we need to think ahead about the next twenty years, for the 99% not the 1% cronies, to put Malaysia back on track for the next generation.

Fourth, New Malaysia needs to pay attention to voices from Sabah and Sarawak so that we can keep a cohesive and integrated federation. The rights and status of Sabah and Sarawak as provided in the 1963 Federal Constitution must be respected to still the voices of separatism or even secession.

Fifth, Malaysia still has elements of an old plural society that see different ethnic groups living side by side but are worlds apart mentally, often living in perpetual fear of each other and seeing everything in ethnic zero-sum game. And our opponents have decided to be merchants of ethnic fear and anxiety to stoke hatred and resentment.

Many spoke about Malay anxiety and fear but actually the same psyche is mirrored among the non-Malays. Also, a free media in New Malaysia needs new values. Many of the owners of the current media outlets are friends of the previous government while many others live in racial

framing and seeing everything purely from racial perspectives. The media should come out of the race-based box.

We need to build a new narrative beyond racial framing for New Malaysia that brings every Malaysian together to solve our common problems as one nation.

### **New Vision for New Malaysia**

To win elections in Malaysia, a coalition needs to gain support from all ethnic groups as well as across the South China Sea. The strategy of the current opposition is to appeal to the extremes of both Malay and non-Malay audience in the hope that Pakatan Harapan would collapse mid-way during the term. Our opponents are playing a divisive and destructive game to create a confidence crisis in the government. They want a clash of identities between our people, we cannot let them win.

To avoid the opposition burning the house down, Pakatan Harapan needs to rise to the occasion to provide a moderate vision to bring all ethnic groups together. And we must have a genuine, sincere and strong cooperation amongst the people of Sabah, Sarawak and Semenanjung. The centre that is the Federal government must hold.

In the Shah Alam Declaration in 2012 and DAP@50 Declaration in 2016, DAP reaffirmed the following tenets:

- To defend and uphold our system of Parliamentary Democracy and Constitutional Monarchy with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong as the Head of State as well as Malay Rulers; and upholding the Federal Constitution as the supreme law and to honour it in the spirit of Merdeka 1957 and the Malaysia Agreement 1963;
- To preserve the special position of the Malays and Bumiputras while protecting the rights of other ethnic groups as enshrined in Article 153 of the Federal Constitution;
- To safeguard the position of Islam as the religion of the Federation while simultaneously championing the freedom of other religions to be practiced in peace and harmony, as enshrined in Article 3 and 11 of the Federal Constitution;
- To dignify Bahasa Melayu as the National Language as enshrined in Article 152 of the Federal Constitution while encouraging the use and study of other mother tongues.

But beyond safeguarding the constitutional guarantees, Pakatan Harapan needs to offer Malaysia a New Vision. And that vision is simply that we shall perform better than BN because we are clean. We are superior to the opposition because we can deliver a better life for the rakyat, economically, politically and socially.

DAP doesn't want to be boxed in as a non-Malay party or a Chinese party. In DAP's fold we have Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kadazans, Dayaks, Orang Asli leaders and members. We have members from all races since our inception in 1966. Our elected representatives include Malays, Chinese, Indians, Ibans and Kadazans. We are a truly Malaysian party.

As much as we want Malaysians to see us as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious social democratic party, our members and grassroots leaders must also see ourselves as representing all Malaysians. This must be the same spirit we hold for our allies in Pakatan Harapan. In fact, we

must think beyond Semenanjung interests to enable the sharing of new vision with our comrades in Sabah and Sarawak.

The electoral strength of Pakatan Harapan is winning in mixed seats, and that is the foundation of our government. Each of the Pakatan parties need to think about serving all Malaysians in their constituencies and in the country as a whole. DAP has to be seen as genuinely solving the concerns of ordinary Malays, just as Bersatu, Amanah and Keadilan need to be seen as genuinely concerned about the concerns of ordinary non-Malay concerns. All of us need to see beyond Semenanjung to ensure a truly Malaysian vision.

The model of bargaining of racially framed elite practiced by the previous government is obsolete. Pakatan Harapan needs to put in a new framework that recognize that all Malaysians have more in common than differences, and while our cultural background may differ, our lives are intertwined and our destiny similar. We must not be caught in ethnic zero sum games but that we can only win or lose together.

We, Pakatan Harapan, have a lot to do than to be stuck in the past.

- New Malaysia needs to reassure all Malaysians that our political, economic and cultural futures are guaranteed. We must shed the belief that we are going to be dominated by a certain race. That is a lie, and that only serves the interest of the racist and religious extremists.
- New Malaysia deserves a new practicable grand vision to show the path for all Malaysians into the future, that there is greater prosperity to be shared by all.

### **Handling the Economy**

Strong economic growth numbers, with the economy expanding by 4.7 per cent in 2018 and a rise of 0.2% inflation rate in March 2019, dispels any deflationary fears following the drop in January 2019 CPI by 0.7 per cent, the lowest in nearly 10 years. Our economy is expected to also perform strongly this year.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) decline proves that the government's policy of abolishing the Goods & Services Tax (GST) and replacing it with the Sales & Services Tax (SST) and stabilising fuel prices with a ceiling price mechanism has helped to reduce inflation rate and expand the economic pie to benefit both businesses and the people.

We have fulfilled our promise of reducing the maximum price of petrol RON 95 from RM2.20 per liter to RM2.08. The fuel price stabilisation policy passes the savings from cheaper fuel prices directly to consumers immediately while the ceiling price mechanism protected them from high and soaring petrol prices. The price decline should improve the purchasing power of Malaysian consumers and add to economic growth.

One of our signature successes is to transform Malaysia from a global kleptocracy to a clean democracy. We can do more if not for the 1MDB and other financial scandals amounting to RM150 billion. The government has to bail out Tabung Haji and Felda for RM17.8 billion and RM6.23 billion respectively over the next 10 years. We shall refund RM37 billion in GST and income tax. For the sake of the people, we will ensure no one is left behind.



## **Reiterating Solidarity**

While focusing on Malaysian issues, the DAP has never wavered in international matters. With current tensions over terrorism, DAP has expressed its solidarity with the Sri Lankan and New Zealand people over a series of terrorist bombings and shootings against innocent worshippers and civilians.

Malaysians must work together against forces of disunity, racism and religious extremism by showing our preference for co-operation not conflict, consultation instead of confrontation and an inclusive shared society rather than an exclusive separate society.

## **The New DAP**

As a political organisation, DAP's organic growth has been stifled by the harassment of the Registrar of Societies between 2012 and 2017. Branches were not allowed to be formed and party constitutional amendments to strengthen our party was blocked. Today's National Conference seeks to remedy that.

One of the highlights of the party constitutional amendments is to elect 30 percent of women into the Central Executive Committee (CEC). DAP believes in women's empowerment. We believe in including women in the decision making process. With this change, DAP Wanita will be entrusted to the elected women CEC in the near future.

We must always remember that the purpose of forming women's wing is that one day it would not be required anymore – the day when women and men reach parity at central leadership level. This is what we meant by gender equality. We practice what we preach. Currently DAP has 20 percent women MPs and State Assemblywomen, the largest contingent among all parties.

About 30 percent of DAP MPs are below 40 years old, and 40 percent of DAP State Assemblymen/women are below 40 years old. DAP aspires to see more younger leaders at all levels to ensure that the party is constantly rejuvenated.

For the benefit of those who want to know the structure of the DAP, allow me to explain. DAP's elected CEC members will be increased from 20 to 30, and they in turn will elect a Secretary-General and the committee members. The structure ensures that the Secretary-General is one that is accepted and entrusted by the fellow CEC leaders, just like our Parliamentary system.

Unlike most Malaysian parties, DAP state delegates elect the State Committees in free and democratic election, but DAP does not put emphasis on the Parliamentary Division. This Constitutional Amendment will further clarify the intention of the party not to put emphasis on the Division to avoid the rise of local and state "warlords".

The New DAP must build capacity, seen by the public as effective leaders and collectively be known as the party of principles and profiles synonymous with integrity, courage, ideals and ideas. DAP recorded the largest electoral victory in the party history, with 42 MPs, 109 Assemblypersons (including one appointed assemblyperson in Sabah), 7 Senators, 400 Councillors and over 500 village heads. DAP has 6 Federal Ministers, 7 Federal Deputy Ministers, one Malaysia Special Envoy to the People's Republic of China, one Parliamentary Deputy Speaker, one Chief Minister, 30 State EXCOs, and in Sabah two State Ministers and 2 Deputy State Ministers, two State Assembly Speakers and two State Assembly Deputy Speakers.

We must use this opportunity in power to carry out institutional reforms, especially in restoring our finances to save our economy. The public must know that we are committed to build a New Malaysia not for the next general elections but for the next generation.

The final test for Pakatan Harapan's success will be the answer to these three questions, "Are you better off now under Pakatan Harapan than under Najib's BN?", "Have you delivered on PH General Election Manifesto?", and "Has the PH government performed better than BN?".

PH must deliver to ensure that the people retains their faith that PH will offer better, if not better at least the same, but not be worse off than BN. We will deliver on our election promises. Further we shall establish an entrepreneurial economy and create 500,000 reasonably paying jobs so that we can future proof the economy that is transiting into the digital age.

And beyond election promises, let us build a New Malaysia for all, that does not belong to only the few cronies but every citizen regardless of race, religion or background. Failure is not an option. PH represents the only hope left that can represent and serve all Malaysians by geography or demography. Bersama kita membina Negara!