

A responsible partner in power – establishing a people-centric government based on the 6 tenets of democracy, justice, rule of law, integrity, human dignity and freedom

First I wish to thank all those who have come afar from Kelantan, Terengganu and Sabah. Especially since today is the 30th anniversary of DAP's entry into Sarawak. This proves that DAP is a truly national Malaysian party.

For forty-two years, DAP leaders faced trials and tribulations for a better future, an undiminished idealism of public interest over private entitlements and our burning passion for a Malaysian Malaysia that puts Malaysian unity above that of race or religion. For our passionate beliefs, our leaders and members were persecuted financially, humiliated and prosecuted in courts, beaten up, locked up and denied our freedoms.

Indeed we shed blood, sweat and tears. But we never doubted, never gave up and never surrendered. We went through hell and back because we believed that "What is right can never be corrupted as wrong and that which is wrong not twisted to become right."

Whilst we never expected the political tsunami on 8 March 2008, we are proud to savour this historical moment with the people. In this hour of triumph we must not forget the sacrifices and contributions of all the leaders and members who made this possible from Sdr Dr Chen Man Hin, Sdr Lim Kit Siang and Sdr Karpal Singh to the late Sdr P. Pato, Allayarham Sdr Mohd Nor Jetty and Sdr Ahmad Nor as well as our loyal veteran members such as Sdr Chong Siew Chiang, Sdr Lau Dak Kee and Datuk Chian Heng Kai.

We must remember the sacrifices of our ordinary members who stuck with us during our hardest times in the last 42 years braving the cruellest ridicule for this moment of recognition. The hard times made us savour this moment that whilst we know that DAP is the best opposition party, we are also qualified to be the best government. This is our reward, not for personal benefit but public recognition of our struggle to establish a people-centric government.

We dedicate ourselves to be a responsible partner in power towards our vision of establishing a people's government based on the 6 tenets of Of Democracy, Justice, Rule Of Law, Integrity, Human Dignity And Freedom.

DAP's vision of this people's government shall ensure political equality, equal economic opportunity, socio-economic justice and compassion.
To realise this vision, DAP

- practises good governance through CAT
 - Competency, Accountability and Transparency that not only creates prosperity but is shared equitably with the rakyat.

- adopts an ethical and moral leadership that professes and gives faith, hope and love; where the people must have faith that the government is there to help and not harm them; the government must give hope to the young that there is a bright future with equal opportunities, level playing field and social justice; and that the government must show love for the people-based on human dignity, compassion and a caring society.

A responsible partner in power

Malaysians have high hopes on the Pakatan Rakyat to govern well in the states that we won power. We wish to underline certain key attributes that makes a responsible partner in power.

First, DAP endorses Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the alternative prime minister of Malaysia and is committed to the cooperation among Pakatan Rakyat parties on the basis of promoting CAT governance and to realise the Malaysian First dream of political equality, equal economic opportunity and socio-economic justice. CAT governance allows us to choose the best so as to be on top of the rest.

Second, any proposal to turn Malaysia into a theocratic state whether an Islamic or a Christian State is contrary to our vision of a civil society that is multi-cultural and multi-religious. Further it violates the Federal Constitution that is based on civil laws.

Third, unlike Barisan Nasional, we are a pact of equals with no one dominating the others.

Four, we believe in the two-coalition system that leads to a healthy functioning democracy where there are as many alternative views as there are alternative political parties. DAP is not a kingmaker and do not aspire to be one. Only the people are the kingmakers. What we want is to be the catalyst for change and to serve the people according to the principles of CAT.

Our nationhood was based on the 1957 Merdeka social contract that promised us much, but delivered little. Fifty years ago, we were promised democracy. We were promised justice, equality, rule of law and integrity. We were promised that we'd be treated with human dignity. We were promised freedom.

As a responsible partner in power, we intend to deliver on these promises.

Democracy

- Reform of free, fair and impartial conduct of elections with an independent Election Commission;
- To conduct local government elections through the amendment of Local Government Act 1976;

Justice

- To implement judicial reform and restore an independent judiciary;
- To share Petronas profits with the people by giving each family that earns less than RM 6,000 monthly RM 6,000 a year;

Rule of law

- To uphold the 1957 Merdeka Federal Constitution as the basis of government which gives equal protection to non-Muslim religion whilst acknowledging Islam as the official religion;
- To check the crime rate by upholding the law without fear or favour;

Integrity

- To combat corruption by making the Anti-Corruption Agency independent and accountable only to Parliament.

Human dignity

- Restore an ethical leadership that respects the rights of women, empowers the youth and listens to the views of the rakyat;
- Assist the poor such as abolishing hardcore poverty in one year what Barisan Nasional cannot achieve in fifty years;

Freedom

- All draconian laws such as the Internal Security Act, Official Secrets Act, Sedition Act, Printing Presses and Publications Act should be repealed or reviewed;
- All ISA detainees, especially the Hindraf 5, namely Uthayakumar, M Manoharan, R Kenghadharan, V Ganabatirau and T Vasanthakumar, should be released immediately and unconditionally.

The coming of age of DAP

Apart from significant electoral gains, the March 8th elections saw the coming of age of DAP:

- Greater gender inclusiveness. DAP fielded 19 female candidates nation-wide, 14 of them are now elected representatives.
- Greater multi-ethnic inclusiveness. We fielded the largest share of Indian candidates of any Malaysian political parties. Nearly thirty percent of our candidates are ethnic Indians and there are now 7 DAP MPs and 12 DAP SAs who are of ethnic Indian background.

- New generation. A third of DAP's candidates are of the age of thirty or below. Among our elected representatives, more than a third are under forty.
- Broadening of DAP's appeal. Estimates shown that our candidates have obtained averagely 20 percent or higher of Malay votes in urban centres.

I am proud that we have been successful in attracting new talents who are professionals, NGO activists, talented and handsome women and men. However we need to strengthen our organisation and conduct capacity building.

For this purpose, the party will be purchasing land to build a new headquarters headed by our National Treasurer Sdr Fong Kui Lun to meet up the challenges of expansion. We hope that all members can support this effort.

Nonetheless, the two greatest achievements of the outgoing CEC team were its team spirit and its ability to recruit new members and men and women of leadership caliber, and provided them a platform that they long for to serve the party and the nation.

Mainstream party

Many of you had not believed when I announced that we do not want to be in perpetual opposition but be a partner in power. Today, we are at the threshold of taking the party to the next level, the next forty years. But the next few years is the most crucial in determining whether we can be a truly national party and partner in the Federal government.

We must transform DAP into a mainstream party perceived by most Malaysians as capable of providing strong and innovative leadership with the highest level of integrity.

First, integrity is our article of faith. The route we took was the lesser travelled ones because we chose to be in politics not for personal gratification and enrichment but for our ideals and love for the nation. Integrity is our trademark for the past forty-two years but we must remind ourselves that power, however limited it is, is the ultimate test of one's integrity.

Second, we are a party for all and not just for our members only. Let us be clear that without the support from disgruntled and disillusioned members of UMNO, MCA, MIC and Gerakan, we would not have won so many seats, and with such massive margins. In the states we govern, we must herald a new paradigm in governance which strives for common public goods and sets aside race, creed, religion, and political affiliation.

Third, we must engage Malaysians of all backgrounds with a deeper cultural understanding of various groups in our multi-ethnic society, and a greater sensitivity and tact in our engagement with the unconventional constituents.

In this election, DAP managed to transform itself as the party of choice for women, youth and ethnic Chinese and Indians, with a substantial increase in urban Malay

support. Whether we can gain Malay support depends on our performance as a partner in power in Penang, Perak and Selangor. Especially as the leading government in Penang, to prove that we can take care of the Malays and deliver what BN cannot do in 50 years. The Penang State government is committed to wiping our hard core poverty in Penang, attempting to do in one year what BN cannot do in 50 years. If we succeed, we will have taken an important first step in attracting a sizable Malay core support.

Our challenge is to consolidate existing support while reaching out intensively to urban Malays, as well as Bumiputras of Sabah and Sarawak.

Our next challenge will be the coming Sarawak State elections and whether we can retain and add on the seats won. We want our Sarawak comrades to know that you are not alone.

Bangsa Malaysia and ketuanan rakyat

Finally, we call on all Malaysians to reject UMNO and BN's extremist racial politics that systematically divides Malaysians by race and religion – bumis and non-bumis, Muslims and non-Muslims. Ethnicity and religious beliefs, not universal values of justice, end up shaping out outcomes. What is so difficult about accepting ketuanan rakyat or Bangsa Malaysia, which was described by former Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad “as people being able to identify themselves with the country, speak Bahasa Malaysia and accept the Federal Constitution”?

We need to face up to the challenges of globalisation by adopting an international mindset that empowers every Malaysian with equal opportunity instead of mediocrity and mindless slogans. We are ready to lead Malaysia forward by transforming our education system to a merit-based system that produces intelligent, rational and unprejudiced Malaysians who respect diversity.

Let us transform Malaysia by being Malaysian first, identified not by the colour of our skin but the content of our character infused with the principles of democracy, equality and social justice for all.

Let us transform Malaysia into a crime-free neighbourhood. Malaysians should enjoy the four basic rights of security – to live, work, study and play in a safe environment.

Let us transform Malaysia into an environment-friendly place, where fishes swim in clean rivers and orang utans, hornbills, pygmy elephants, tigers and rhinos roam freely in protected forests.

Let us transform Malaysia from what it is now into what it should have been as envisaged by our founding fathers, by restoring the Merdeka Constitution. The original Merdeka Constitution did not allow for repressive laws such as the Internal Security Act and the Printing Presses & Publications Act. Not only was there independence of the judiciary, but there was also independence of the Elections Commission.

To ensure every Malaysian is allowed to participate in the democratic process, some of the elements of civil society must be evident: free association and expression; regulated but open and market-oriented economies; aid to the poor, orphaned, elderly, sick, or disabled; and finally, civic cultures that cherish diversity and individual freedoms but also respect human needs for community and shared visions for the common good.

This political journey towards Bangsa Malaysia and ketuanan rakyat will decide whether a people-centric government can succeed. Can we discard our different ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs for Bangsa Malaysia? The historic political tsunami on March 8 have restored our faith that Bangsa Malaysia Boleh!

I wish to thank all the ordinary members whose hardships and labour of love for the party gave encouragement for us to carry on. You have allowed us to write history by forming the first CAT people-centric government in Malaysia; let us create the miracle by retaining the CAT people-centric government and winning the Federal and more state governments in the next general elections.