

Berat sama dipikul, ringan sama dijinjing.  
Gunung sama didaki, lurah sama dituruni.  
Biar putih tulang, jangan putih mata.

## **Preamble**

Salam Ubah dan salam Bersih kepada semua.

I thank all invited guests, delegates and observers for being here, especially to those who traveled afar.

Today we are gathered here at the DAP National Conference 2014 in Subang Jaya to chart the future of the party and Malaysia for we believe that together with all other progressive Malaysians, we hold the key to Putrajaya and to a new and better Malaysia.

By May 2015, it would be two years after the 2013 general election and almost the mid-term before we face the 14th general election. And, the Sarawak state election is looming.

The National Conference 2014 is held following the 16th National Congress on 15th and 16th December 2012 in Penang and the re-balloting for the existing Central Executive Committee (CEC) at the National Special Congress on 29th September 2013 in Petaling Jaya to thwart the mischievous designs and mala fide intentions of the Registrar of Society to break up the party.

The re-balloting of the CEC with the same set of leaders that were previously elected have allowed the DAP to emerge more united and stronger as a party. The DAP is set to consolidate, renew and expand; now more than ever.

We must set the agenda for the next election and for the next generation. If we do not set an agenda that unites all Malaysians for a common purpose and a shared destiny, the alternative would be to accept UMNO and BN's agenda to divide and destroy Malaysia through extremism, abuse of power and corruption.

The theme for this Conference is "Berat sama dipikul, ringan sama dijinjing.", that reflects the DAP's commitment to the solidarity, sharing and sacrifice of all Malaysians towards unity, tolerance, social justice and equal opportunities for all.

This message of solidarity, sharing and sacrifice is particularly important, when we face a mounting economic crisis that will have dire consequences for the poor, helmed by a government that has lost the plot and can only counter by shamelessly breaking promises and blaming the economic hardship on minorities and imaginary enemies of Islam, Malays and the Rulers.

## **Tributes**

2014 is likely to be remembered as Malaysia's annus horribilis in decades but we have faith in Malaysians that we will rise as a people to overcome the challenges ahead.

As a people, Malaysians have been crippled by a double tragedy of MH17 and MH370; and DAP extends its sympathy, support and solidarity to the affected family members. We will support all efforts to seek justice for those who were murdered on MH17 and search for the missing MH370.

With deepest regret and sadness that we mourn the passing of our party stalwarts who had stood together with us for a new Malaysia based on democracy, justice and equal opportunity. We bid them farewell and we extend our condolences to their respective family members.

**Sdr Karpal Singh**

Our Party Chairman Sdr Karpal Singh, who has been one of the loudest voices of conscience to our nation, tragically left us on the 17th April 2014. Yet even until his final moments, he was fearlessly fighting the oppressive forces, who wished to change the character and identity of our Federal Constitution. Sdr. Tan Kok Wai assumed the position of acting National Chairman.

**Sdr Wong Ho Leng**

The party was plunged into further sorrow and despair, when on the 21st June, the then Chairman of DAP Sarawak Sdr Wong Ho Leng, passed away after a long battle with cancer. Sdr Ho Leng's legacy will remain strong in the ever growing influence and current leadership of DAP Sarawak that he has built up over the years.

**Sdr Seah Leong Peng**

Sdr Seah Leong Peng's departure on 1st May spelt another painful bereavement for the party. He was a true testament to the power of dedication and unfettered hard work in building a strong grassroots support that allowed PR and DAP to win 55% of the popular vote in the 2013 general election.

**Dr Chen Man Hin's 90th years old birthday**

On a happier note, I would like to report to the National Conference that our beloved founding Chairman Sdr. Chen Man Hin has just reached a very rare milestone in human life, celebrating his 90th birthday in November. Dr. Chen is a towering Malaysian who devoted his life to work towards a better Malaysia, without whom the DAP would not exist. We wish him good health.

## **By-elections**

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all leaders and members who had campaigned tirelessly in the Bukit Gelugor, Teluk Intan and Kajang by-elections for DAP and Pakatan Rakyat candidates, and we thank the voters for their support as well. We welcome Sdr Ramkarpal for joining us in our parliamentary delegation. We salute the tenacity of Sdri Dyana Sofya in giving a good electoral fight. And we congratulate Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah for becoming a wakil rakyat, again.

## **The State of the Party**

I would like to thank the delegates for the trust and mandate given to the Central Executive Committee by being elected twice at both the election on 15th December 2012 and the re-balloting on 29th September 2013.

Since the electoral success of 2008, the UMNO-controlled Barisan Nasional has been attacking the DAP day and night. The reason is simple: if Malaysians, especially the Malays can accept the DAP's non-racial politics, integrity in leadership and good governance, it will spell the end of BN and UMNO. UMNO and BN's relentless hostilities even amounted to attempts by the Registrar of Societies (ROS) to ban DAP on the eve of the 13th General Election in 2013. We refused to back down and we have won the first round.

Then the ROS came charging at us. And again, a great legal battle was won by our Sdr Gobind Singh Deo in court, when the ROS was forced to concede in court that the ROS cannot refuse to recognize the right of the Central Executive Committee, elected on the 29th September 2013, to make decisions. Although DAP was constrained to agree to the ROS's earlier demand of conducting fresh party elections, at risk of being de-registered, and we did hold this reelection but under protest, we worked in solidarity and proved that we will never be defeated.

We expect the ROS to come charging at us again for the third time, the fourth, the fifth and again and again. That is why we are proposing some party constitutional amendments not just to test the ROS but to protect the party from sabotage at the eve of the electoral battle. Although the threats are there, we will continue with our struggle. We have faith in our party members, that each and every single one of us will do our very best to prevent de-registration and ensure the survival of the party.

## **The next five years and the next fifty years**

There is a saying that "When the going gets tough, the tough get going". The DAP has gone through trials and tribulations in the last 48 years since the party was formed on 18th March 1966. In less than a year and half, on 18th March 2016, we will be celebrating DAP's 50th anniversary. Sdr Liew Chin Tong has been tasked with the 50th anniversary celebrations which will be the launching pad for the 14th general elections.

While the DAP has been steadfast in its commitments to the struggle for a democratic and socially just Malaysia with equal opportunities for all, since the political tsunami on 8th March 2008; DAP is expected to play the role of a principled and effective opposition and also a partner in power of a government-in-waiting.

DAP must offer a long term vision of moderation, equity, justice, freedom and economic growth through a set of desirable and achievable policies for ordinary Malaysians of all ethnic and religious backgrounds, from Batu Sumpah in Sabah to Sarawak and onwards to Johor and Bukit Kayu Hitam in Perlis.

We must recognise not only the contributions of Malaysians but that of Sabah and Sarawak as one of the three(not one of 13 states) equal integral partners with Peninsular Malaysia that make up Malaysia in 1963. Only all three will make one Malaysia, where without either Sabah or Sarawak there will be no Malaysia

### **Our party's constitutional amendments**

The Central Executive Committee is tabling several major proposals to amend the party's Constitution to strengthen the party and also increase women participation which is key to winning the 14th General Election. I wish to thank Sdr. Loke Siew Fook for leading the Constitutional Amendment Committee, as well as CEC members who served on the Committee, for their efforts in assisting the party to strengthen its organisational structure.

We propose that the Central Executive Committee be expanded from 20 to 30 elected members to give more opportunities to all to aspire to positions of leadership, especially as "the party for the young and women". The DAP prides itself as having the largest porportion of young leaders at the central leadership and among elected representatives. For instance, 21 out of 104 current DAP state assemblypersons were born after 1980.

It is also proposed that a 30% women quota is imposed on elected positions, to ensure that at least 9 out of the 30 elected CEC members are women. The DAP believes however, that women are equal partners in our struggle and is committed towards gender equality. Let us not forget that whilst leaders like Sdr Karpal, Kit Siang, Kok Wai, Seng Giaw and myself have faced prosecution and persecution, and new leaders in Anthony Loke, Tony Pua, Ng Wei Aik, Phee Boon Poh, R.S Rayer who face similar action, we have also women leaders like Teresa Kok and Teo Nie Ching who are charged for sedition or face sedition charges.

The terms for State Committees are extended from two years to three years to align with the CEC, and Branch Committees from a year to two years in the hope that a slightly longer period to perform can help to consolidate the party's support bases. Parliamentary Liaison Committees are revamped with election coordination in mind to better prepare the party for electoral battles.

A term limit of three terms for state chairperson is a move to ensure continuous renewal and rejuvenation of the party and train leaders at the state level. The DAP was the first party to limit our top leader theSecretary-General's term more than a decade ago. Today we make another historic and progressive move to expand this term limits to the state chairperson.

I humbly request for your support in the various amendments to consolidate the DAP in the face of greater challenges as well as opportunities ahead of us.

### **The party of ideas and the party of the future**

It must however be said, that a great party structure can only get us so far. Ultimately, what matter most are the ideas that define the party. The DAP must see itself as “the party of ideas”, “the party of the future” and the “party of hope”.

One of the core efforts to make DAP the party of the future is to make a lasting imprint with Malaysians in Sabah and Sarawak, who were previously ignored by Barisan Nasional because they were seen as BN “fixed deposits”.

The recently announced Royal Commission of Inquiry report on illegal immigrants in Sabah, is a cover-up and a whitewash of a 40-year long injustice against the people of Sabah who are now strangers in their own land. Those who were responsible for this mess, both at the policy level and at the working level, should be named and be charged under the laws. They must be punished for betraying fellow Malaysians as well as our sacrosanct Malaysian citizenship.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the Central leadership’s support for the Bintulu Declaration presented by DAP Sarawak at its state convention on 26th October 2014. The concept of Equal Partnership with Sarawak, as well as Sabah, should be the guiding principle for all to adopt.

The DAP, just a little more than a year ago launched, the Impian Sabah and Sarawak campaigns under the Impian Malaysia vision, to expedite and trigger a paradigm shift in political perceptions and affinity in rural Malaysia, particularly in East Malaysia. The road to Putrajaya goes through Sabah and Sarawak.

The projects, ranging from the provision of gravity-fed water to villages who have been denied this basic right, to the construction of basic roads for villages which are cut off from vehicle access, to the building and repairs of basic amenities such as river jetties, bridges, community centres and places of worship, have captured the imagination of rural Sabah and Sarawak.

The Impian team have since increased the scope of activities to include projects to upgrade the economic well-being of the rural folks. This includes the provision of microcredit to oil palm smallholders, the set up of Kedai Impian operated by the villagers, and organising seminars for arts and crafts for the womenfolk.

We have also started conducting Impian Education Camps to help stir interest in English, Mathematics and Science among the rural children as well as to emphasize the importance of education to their parents. Come January, we will be conducting our very first Impian Health Camp to the marginalised rural folks, courtesy of a dedicated team of volunteer doctors and specialists.

I wish to thank Sdr Tony Pua for his efforts and leadership and all CEC leaders who have gone over. Let me just stop here to present to you a short video of the work carried out by Impian Malaysia.

The DAP is proud to have completed more than 30 projects big and small, benefiting more than 800 families and involving 150 selfless volunteers from all races and backgrounds all over Malaysia. We would like to congratulate and thank these volunteers for upholding the Impian Malaysia spirit, the spirit of “berat sama dipikul, ringan sama dijinjing”.

Let all DAP leaders make this commitment by ensuring that all elected representatives must make a least one trip to Sarawak before the next state general election.

DAP enters its “second-phase”, according to Sdr. Lim Kit Siang, by focusing on semi-urban areas which eluded DAP, where most marginal seats lie. DAP must not only be the party of ideas but one that make ideas work, beginning with the Gelang Patah Declaration, of how we address the problems faced by marginalised Indian communities in Penang. Let us look at one more video.

### **On the same ship**

Malaysians are on the same ship. DAP leaders will sink and swim with Malaysians on this ship. Unlike BN leaders who have Permanent Resident status in foreign countries, we have no other place but Malaysia. Yet we must concede that we face an uphill battle to this ingrained perception perpetuated by the lies of UMNO that the DAP is anti-Malay and anti-Islam.

When we expose corruption and police brutality we are accused of being anti-Rulers because the Malay Rulers appoint those who head such institutions of Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission or SPRM and the police, which are helmed by Malays. When we talk of Islamic religious edicts or fatwa applying only to Muslims and not applying to non-Muslims, we are accused of being anti-Islam by interfering in the religious affairs of Muslims.

And yet when the Penang PR state government doubled the annual Budget allocations to Islamic religious affairs as compared to the previous BN state government, MCA and Gerakan criticised us to the extent of being anti non-Muslims. NO UMNO leader defended the Penang PR state government against MCA or Gerakan, for doubling annual allocations for Islamic affairs in Penang.

DAP supports the Rulers, the position of Islam and Malays as well as protecting the legitimate rights of non-Malays and non-Muslims as stated in the Federal Constitution. Let me state clearly that DAP is not anti-Malay nor anti-Islam nor anti non-Muslims. We are only anti-corruption. And anti-BN as BN is the mother of all corruption. The DAP is and will always be a non-racial multiethnic party that fights for all.

There will be more ferocious attacks by UMNO on DAP as more and more young Malays see DAP as a potential platform to champion their shared dreams for a better Malaysia. We must convince Malays that DAP, as one of its governing parties in PR, would never hurt the interests of ordinary Malays but instead, deliver a better life for all Malaysians, Malays included.

All Malaysians must openly oppose racism and religious extremism, in particular the uncivilised politics of Perkasa and Isma as well as the racist elements within UMNO. We fully support the open letter by 25 former top civil servants who demanded Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to take action against right wing groups that are hijacking Islam by perverting the moderate nature of the religion into an instrument of hate and violence.

The time has come for the Prime Minister to exercise leadership – to lead from the front and not from behind. Moderation in Islam is about truth, equity and justice.

There is no equity when Datuk Seri Najib refuses to answer questions about the RM 42 billion debts of 1MDB. There is no justice when Sedition Act is used against opposition leaders and academics. There is no truth when Najib breaks his thrice-repeated promise to abolish the Sedition Act, instead fortifying it or paying BR1M of RM950 when BN had promised RM1200 during the last general elections.

There is no mention of 1Malaysia by UMNO anymore. Only the language of lies, hate and violence used by racists and extremists alleging that the Chinese's economic strength comes from illegal activities in gambling, prostitution and recreational activities.

Or worse the failure to act against ex-Deputy Minister Dr Mashitah Ibrahim's dangerous and provocative lies in blaming the Chinese community of burning the Quran as part of their prayer rituals, even though Kedah Menteri Besar had announced that the Quran was torn by a demented Malay Muslim who had been sent to a mental hospital for treatment.

### **A winning coalition worthy of a government as good as its people**

That is why there must be a change of government from one of hate to love for our Malaysian brothers and sisters and to liberate ourselves from a fate full of national government and personal debts. We must not be a nation filled with loan sharks but of economic dignity, we must not be a nation of corrupt political cronies and parasites but productive generators of wealth.

I fervently believe that UMNO and Barisan Nasional would fall in the next general election but for the PR to win, it must have an effective, broadbase, winning coalition that unites all forces in the society to defeat UMNO Barisan Nasional convincingly. Even Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin concedes that it is probable for BN to lose because a 2% swing in votes will cause BN to lose power by winning only 103 Parliamentary seats.

As UMNO is getting increasingly insecure, sedition charges are used against critics and more racial sentiments to whip up support for UMNO. The despicable attempt to put Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim behind bar is just another desperate act. We stand by Anwar and all other leaders who are persecuted

UMNO deserves to lose like the Congress Party of India. But to prove that we are a worthy government is very different from showing that we are an effective opposition. We must win the middle ground and Middle Malaysia can only be won if PR can demonstrate that our good governance is superior and cleaner than BN as well as benefit and not harm the rakyat..

We must present a coherent and consistent policy agenda that is convincing to the middle ground as the partisan bases of each of the Pakatan Rakyat parties can only get us so far. Let me be frank. There can be no repeat of the Selangor Menteri Besar crisis and all its consequences of public disunity on display. Pakatan Rakyat would not be able to enter the next election not having agreed upon who would be the next Prime Minister nor on a clear and definite position that there will be no hudud laws.

These are the aspirations of the moderates within Middle Malaysia. A winning PR coalition must have clear policies that win among all ethnic groups, especially the majority Malays, and across Sabah and Sarawak as well.

I call on all Pakatan Rakyat leaders to take up the challenge of creating a winning coalition that brings together all progressive forces in the society to execute this historic mission of defeating UMNO convincingly. We owe the 52% voters who voted for us, a responsibility to make their economic future secure. With the drop in oil price and ringgit, Malaysia is in for tough times. Just as there is no substitute for good governance, there is no substitute for hard work.

### **Economy Always The Economy**

The theme for the 2014 National Conference – “Berat sama dipikul, ringan sama dijinjing” – is DAP’s response to the challenges of income inequality, lack of high-income jobs and equal opportunities.

The fundamental contradiction in the Malaysian economy is that 2 million and half skilled Malaysians with high education attainment are working overseas yet, 6.7 million unskilled foreigners, documented and undocumented, are working in Malaysia.

Today, even 7-Eleven hires foreign labour to man the stores and private contractors rely on them to clean up our rubbish. The Penang State Government tried a different approach via the Seberang Perai Municipal Council(MPSP) through the termination of all cleaning and garbage collection contracts with private contractors who mostly hired unskilled foreign labour at low wage.

Instead MPSP hired 2,469 Malaysians at RM1,500 and above per month.. In the past these garbage contractors, who are most likely to be cronies of the previous government, have used foreign workers to pad their profits. Even though our costs have now risen by 50% extra, we have created jobs for 2,469 ordinary Malaysian families who can prove that they can make Penang Cleaner and Greener.

If the economy can generally pay municipal cleaners or equivalents at RM1,500 per month, why is it that fresh graduates cannot get jobs?. In many other countries, even if the economy depends on unskilled foreign labour, the government itself would not hire unskilled foreign labour.

We want to showcase the PR Penang state government as a model of good governance because we believe in the ideal of a government as good as its people, especially those who are honest and hardworking. Indeed, the annual budget surpluses and annual commendation accorded on Penang in the annual Auditor-General Reports and even by Transparency International, proves that a clean government can do better than a corrupt administration.

The budget surpluses annually are achieved despite almost doubling development expenditure compared to the previous BN government and allocating almost 12% of our Budget is given for cash assistance, the highest amongst all state governments. DAP has proven that we are an effective opposition party that is a fearless voice and defender of the rakyat but that our record in Penang, shows we can also govern within PR much better than BN.

DAP is calling for cheaper fuel pump price. Despite the more than 40% drop in international oil price from US 105-110 per barrel to less than USD 60 per barrel, petrol prices in Malaysia have not seen a similar 40% drop in price. The retail price for RON97 and RON95 decreased by only nine sen to RM2.46 per litre and four sen (RM2.26 per litre) whilst the price of diesel increased instead by three sen to RM2.23 per liter is just unacceptable.

The DAP is opposed to the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in April 2015. First, given that more than 60% of the population are receiving BR1M, the social cost of depleting disposable income of already low income families would be extremely steep. Second, the GST is likely to result in inflation which will cut domestic consumption, and slow the growth economy-wide. Third, the implementation of GST is likely to wipe out the informal business sector and the small businesses.

DAP contends that there is no need for the GST if corruption, inefficiency and wastage is rooted out as outlined in the annual Auditor-General Reports. Instead of punishing the cronies, ordinary Malaysians have to pay the price of BN's failure in good governance.

## **Conclusion**

DAP and PR offers an alternative formula for nation-building through a party of ideas not of racism and extremism, that benefits the public not the individual cronies and saves not steal our children's future.

We must never rely on the rhetoric of extremism and racism but commit ourselves to action that there is no substitute for good governance that delivers a better life for ourselves, a better future for our children and a hope of creating a proud developed

nation with economic dignity and respect for human rights. A nation where we are one in solidarity and share our successes equally with our sacrifices.

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