

Speech by DAP Secretary-General Lim Guan Eng at the DAP National Conference in Shah Alam on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2016

## A New Deal for Malaysians

I would like to first welcome and salute DAP National Delegates who gather here today at an extraordinary time of Malaysia and the world. We celebrate 50 years of DAP this year after an extraordinary journey that took us from the wilderness of opposition to a partner in government, from the prison cells to the corridors of power. And most importantly, we have proven we can govern better than functioning as an opposition party.

We fought many opponents, some who even jailed us yet these very opponents are our new allies. Indeed there are no permanent friends nor enemies, only permanent principles. And the abiding principle that unites us is to save a Malaysia that is in mortal danger, her economy in crisis, her innocent people suffering from authoritarian abuses of power and corruption, and our nation turning into a kleptocracy.

It is for this reason we welcome the presence in our National Conference for the first time in our party history, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who never had RM2.6 billion or RM4.2 billion in his personal bank account.

In this unique moment of Malaysian history, I know I am speaking not just to DAP members and supporters but also to millions of Malaysians who had just been subjected to a vicious campaign of lies and hatred against the DAP. DAP is an innocent victim of this hate campaign by those who wants to find a scapegoat for their failures.

We refuse to be a bogeyman for those who stoke racial and religious hatred. Our only crime is that we refuse to give up on our Malaysian Dream, a promise for a better future through A New Deal for Malaysians.

### **1. DAP@50**

First let us celebrate Democratic Action Party's 50th anniversary as a united, disciplined, reasoned and cohesive movement, thanks to contributions, dedications and sacrifices of DAP leaders, members and

supporters, especially our veteran members. Today's National Conference will pay tributes to many of our national and grassroots leaders who helped us overcome challenges and kept the party afloat during our darkest hour.

## **2. The party of ideals**

DAP is strong because we thrive not through power or wealth but through the power of ideas, ideals and principles. Our Rocket symbol signified that power of our beliefs and political quest for the possible.

DAP is dedicated to the enduring ideals of justice, freedom, democracy, equal opportunity, integrity and human dignity; committed to fundamental principles of defending the rights of the people by fighting oppressive laws, corruption, cronyism and abuse of powers, as well as embracing new ideas that provide solutions to uplift the economic livelihood and prosperity of 30 million Malaysians.

## **3. DAP as a Malaysian party and Impian Malaysia**

DAP is first and foremost a Malaysian party for all ethnic groups, including Malays and orang Asli, without differentiating by geography nor demography and with particular emphasis for Sabah and Sarawak. This is the essence of Malaysian Malaysia.

Lest we forget, as stated in the Shah Alam Declaration in 2012, DAP reaffirms the following tenets in the *DAP@50 Declaration* to be adopted by this National Conference today:

- 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 Bumiputeras 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.

Is all the above extreme liberalism that threatens Malays and Islam? In Penang, allocation for Islam is doubled under the Pakatan government and yet we are labelled as anti-Islam.

It is time for us to reject identity politics that divides and alienates us through the politics communal identity that breeds hate and fear. DAP rejects racially-based parties and recognises the importance of working with Malay parties and prominent Malay personalities.

Being sensitive to issues that concern Malays and Muslims, DAP has never sought the position of the Prime Minister. Neither have we ever asked that a Chinese be a Prime Minister but has always supported a Malay especially Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, as Prime Minister. DAP will not dominate the government should the opposition win power but will be a fair and responsible partner.

DAP will defend and uphold the basic nature of our Federal Constitution as agreed to in 1957 and 1963. DAP disagrees with those who want to change its nature by using ordinary legislation that merely requires a simple majority of parliamentary members present. Any laws that affect the character and identity of the Federal Constitution must be by a constitutional amendment with a 2/3 majority. DAP reiterates its opposition to any laws that is unconstitutional

Defending and upholding the Federal Constitution is not extreme liberalism. Opposing detention without trial especially using terrorist laws against a peaceful civil rights activist like Maria Chin Abdullah is not extreme liberalism. Stealing liberally billions of ringgit of the nation's money is extreme liberalism.

Let us therefore embrace a civic identity based on common values like freedom, justice, integrity, rule of law and democracy, where the people unite for a shared prosperity, a brighter hope for the future and human

dignity of all citizens. Let us all commit ourselves to rebuild a modern Malaysia that is both progressive and peaceful, prosperous and fair.

#### 4. We are a principled party

DAP has always been committed to be a responsible partner in government in a coalition. In the spirit of partnership, cooperation and understanding, as well as facing political reality, DAP only contested 51 out of 222 parliamentary seats.

Therefore, contrary to the lies of Prime Minister Dato Seri Najib Razak, there is no way DAP can take over the country. How can 51 out of 222 parliamentary seats rule the country? This is a cheap political stunt and scare-mongering to distract attention from the failed economic management.

DAP is, and was never a Chinese party, or a race-based party right from the beginning. We are a Malaysian party led by Malaysians and serving the interests of all Malaysians, regardless of race, religion, region, or gender. DAP has Malay, Chinese, Indian and even a Kadazan elected as MPs or State Assemblyman.

How can a Prime Minister stoop so low as to stoke racial sentiments by linking Hew Kuan Yew to DAP when Hew is no longer a DAP member? If we use the Prime Minister's standards, then can we also not say that the Prime Minister shares the views of his former information officer Datuk Nasir Safar who in 2010 called Chinese women "prostitutes" and Indians "beggars"?

"Datuk Nasir Safar telah menimbulkan isu perkauman iaitu orang Cina dan India sekarang kekal sebagai pendatang di bumi Malaysia. Kononnya, mereka yang menentang keputusan kerajaan untuk menghadkan 12 matapelajaran sahaja untuk peperiksaan SPM, akan ditarik kerakyatan. Kononnya pendatang awal India menjadi pengemis dan pendatang Cina menjadi pelacur."

For BN, winning government is all about getting Ministerial posts. Look at an UMNO MP demanding the Transport Minister's post of the MCA President Liow Tiong Lai. Neither the Prime Minister nor any UMNO Ministers came out to defend Liow. If Liow has any honour, he should

resign and not crawl back to Putrajaya for next Wednesday's Cabinet meeting.

Despite this public humiliation, Liow would crawl back because of his love for Ministerial posts. Is Liow going to resign as promised now that the Prime Minister has said that UMNO and PAS are officially co-operating together? How then can the public expect Liow to fulfil his promises of recognition of Unified Examination Certificates or increased allocation for Chinese schools?

The Prime Minister is pitting the next general election as a battle between Malays represented by UMNO and Chinese under the DAP. This is a false and dangerous imagery! The real election battle is between the 1% of BN's cronies and the 99% of ordinary Malaysians who want a better Malaysia.

#### **5. The real issues -It's the economy!**

What are the real concerns of the 99%? The economy! Four core issues that are of great concern to millions of ordinary Malaysians, especially ordinary Malays are: the Goods and Services Tax (GST), 1MDB scandal, the sharp decline of the ringgit's value, and the rising cost of living as shown by the increase in petrol, cooking oil and toll rates.

When incomes do not rise, GST effectively eats into the disposable income of ordinary Malaysians. The RM52 billion 1MDB global scandal and RM4.2 billion donation scandal has eroded confidence in the Malaysian economy and institutions, and is partly responsible for the dismal performance of the ringgit vis-à-vis other currencies.

We present a New Deal that eliminates corruption scandals like 1 MDB, abolishes GST and North-South Highway toll rates to improve the people's livelihood.

#### **6. A New Deal for the 99% Malaysians**

Malaysia needs a New Deal that envisions the virtuous cycle of increased wages, better skills, higher productivity and innovation for Malaysian workers and as well as forging collaboration with industries. We need an entrepreneurial and welfare state that brings hope to all.

We will also need to ensure better public transport, health, education and housing for all Malaysians – a welfare state that serves the needs of both urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Better jobs, growth, innovation and better quality of life binds us together as Malaysians.

## **7. A New Deal for Sabah and Sarawak and new federalism**

The Malaysian federalism favours the Federal Government at the expense of State rights. Resentment in the states is serious and there is a need for a New Deal for Sabah and Sarawak, as well as a new form of federalism for states in Peninsula Malaysia.

DAP take cognizance of the historical fact that Malaysia Federation was formed by four entities – Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore (exited in 1965) in 1963. For this reason, the status of Sabah and Sarawak should be restored as one of the 3 entities that formed Malaysia and not be diminished as just another one of the 13 states in Malaysia.

For the past 53 years, Sabah and Sarawak have been subjected to an overly-centralised Federal government. A profound sense of disappointment and deprivation engulf Sabahans and Sarawakians. DAP is committed to offer a New Deal for Sabah and Sarawak that recognises the equal partner status of Sabah and Sarawak in the federation, as well as to decentralise powers and tax revenue.

Under a new framework of New Federalism, Sabah and Sarawak shall enjoy a wide range of autonomy in community policing, health, education, transport, as well as enjoying a sizable share of tax revenue to finance the autonomy areas of competence. Such a New Federalism framework can also apply to Johor, Selangor, Kelantan and Penang.

## **8. A New Deal for Youth and Women**

As the party of ideas and ideals which are at the forefront of promoting gender equality, the DAP shall continue to endeavour to be the party of choice for women.

As a nation we should harness the talents and skills of women by striving to eliminate discrimination against women in society and the workplace and create better childcare infrastructure and support for mothers who work. Only when we increase the female labour participation rate from the present 54% to 65%, do we have a shot at being a high-income nation.

It is our belief that when we empower women, we empower the nation. And that to win power we must win over the women – that is why we reserved a 30% gender quota for Central Executive Committee(CEC) elections.

And, as the party founded by young idealists and constantly provide space for young leaders to emerge at all levels, the DAP shall also continue to be the party of choice for the youth.

DAP believes that steps need to be taken to lift incomes of young people and give them better opportunities in employment, education and healthcare. We must implement policies that create meaningful employment opportunities, skills and vocational training.

We will not allow the kleptocrats to steal your future!

## **9. BERSIHkan Malaysia**

For the New Deal to happen, we need a Clean Malaysia that can remove the current regime of kleptocracy, and rebuild our democracy with constitutional reforms to restore the rights of the people.

We deplore the recent spate of arrests, prosecution and persecution under Security Offences (Special Measures) 2012 (SOSMA), Sedition Act 1948, Official Secrets Act 1972 used against opposition and Bersih leaders, especially Bersih Chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah. We also

oppose the National Security Council Act 2016 which has not been assented to by the Yang di Pertuan Agong.

To rebuild Malaysia, we need a clean set of institutions which include clean, fair and credible elections, a world class parliament that represents the voices and concerns of all Malaysians, a free media, an independent judiciary, and a neutral and effective civil service.

### **10. Political Realignment**

We are living in unprecedented times. The past three years saw PAS moving closer to UMNO as well as violating prior consensus of the Opposition coalition, leading to the split in PAS and the collapse of Pakatan Rakyat in June 2015. Together with Parti KeADILan Rakyat and Parti Amanah Negara, Pakatan Harapan was formed in September 2015. The period also saw the split in UMNO, resulting in the formation of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia.

Can the DAP and our coalition partners give hope to Malaysians that together we can turn things around fairly quickly? Do we have a compelling narrative to win the next general election with our allies? And, can a New Deal provide for a better tomorrow for all Malaysians?

I say yes we can!

Whilst PAS is willing to hug UMNO and overlook BN turning Malaysia into a kleptocracy for its own political interests, we must have the courage to unite the people to save Malaysia. And this would include working together with Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, former Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and encouraging ordinary members of UMNO and PAS to be part of the change for a better Malaysia.

### **The unfinished journey, the Malaysian Dream**

The battle lines for GE14 have already been drawn: Between the old regime long past its expiration date, and a New Deal, a New Hope for all of us. The voters of Malaysia are faced with a stark choice: to cast their vote for autocrats or democrats, kleptocrats or Bersih.



The next election won't be easy. But we are not afraid. We will fight together, as Malaysians, as a people who love and care for each other, for the future of our children to make our Malaysian Dreams come true.

**Let us unite as one people. Bersihkan Malaysia, Selamatkan Rakyat.  
Terus berjuang!**

**LIM GUAN ENG**