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Not time yet

FINDING a common equation to suit each and everyone has never been an easy task. Nevertheless, the Barisan Nasional coalition of 14 political parties effectively allows the voices of all communities to be heard and decision on party matters is based on general consensus.

Yes, being heard is what matters and the alliance system has worked well for Malaysians since we attained independence 43 years ago.

Through the years, we have toiled and persevered under various National Front leaders, bringing Malaysia to where it is today - a developing country that has progressed and prospered in certain fields. In some areas, we stand head and shoulders above others while in others, there is much room for improvement. More importantly, the people continue to enjoy a meaningful life.

And if the coalition is a time-tested system, and has effectively served everyone's interest, why do we need to re-invent the wheel? Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said recently the time is not right yet for Barisan component parties to merge and become a "single party" open to all Malaysians. Granted, there are some people with ideals and aspirations of seeing such a merger come to fruition, but the notion does not seem sound at present.

Even the best of systems has its deficiencies, but to shift to an entirely new structure now is not practical. Malaysia has a unique multi-ethnic social fabric that deems it difficult for anyone to weigh the balance of interest of its different communities.

In terms of economic, social and political development, it is an extremely arduous responsibility for those at the helm to ensure a level playing field for all. It is up to everyone to tap opportunities available if they are to succeed.

Despite the imbalance, we continue to strive to ensure that the economic cake grows to enable everyone to have a share. This is among the coalition's immediate priorities. Our economy is gradually gaining momentum and we have to work doubly hard to sustain growth and prosperity. At the same time, we have to be perceptive to global changes so we can be better prepared to face challenges.

It should be the agenda of all component parties to consolidate their internal strength and provide further momentum to development policies. In unity lies strength. In fact, the recent decision to defer the application of four political parties to join the Barisan Nasional was to enable these parties to strengthen their membership first. Rationally, they will have to prove they can deliver the goods within the party first and continue to deliver them should they be accepted into the coalition fold.

As the country marches towards its objective of developed nation status, it needs the co-operation and understanding of each and everyone to achieve its goals. The present system of governance, albeit far from perfect, has worked well for the country. It is these imperfections that allow us to learn from our mistakes and give us room to grow.

Conventional and contemporary wisdom dictates that substance is more important than form in our endeavours to achieve our desires. Our economic growth and prosperity, together with stability and harmony among the communities, are realities that have emerged from years of industriousness and co-operation.

Effective representation provides far more substance than names can

offer. Lest it slips our mind, there is time for everything.
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