

**Wake-up call for '1Malaysia - a work in progress'**  
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The Isis in collaboration with Yayasan '1Malaysia', organizers of the seminar 'Living in a Multi-ethnic Society' are to be congratulated on the selection of this topic, particularly because of its pivotal relevance and meaning to national integration and national unity in Malaysia.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak in his keynote address appears to have consolidated the contribution of a few Malaysians who have the capacity and capability, in asserting that the affirmative action policy could be a cornerstone for empowerment to attain '1Malaysia' and the government transformation programme.

However, in all humility and with the greatest of respect, I have to say that Najib's contention of 'Malaysia-a work in progress' is simply not good enough. Commentators here reflected the views of others in pointing out that we are interested in 'work' and 'progress' and that there is no evidence of any work having actually begun at all for '1Malaysia'.

These are clarion calls to get moving urgently. The affirmative action policy implemented under the NEP created a 'lot of distortion to the economic system' and these have to be eliminated before any transformation becomes possible.

Of even greater significance, therefore is the real danger that saying 'work in progress' that 'cannot be achieved overnight' may be interpreted by some as giving a license to 'pass the buck'.

With respect, it may well be that Najib is not being properly advised. As I understand it, some of the 'experts' themselves are divided whether to embark on a 'road- map' or a 'blueprint' for '1Malaysia'.

The former would merely indicate moving from one point to another, but not how to get there, whereas the latter must necessarily encompass a comprehensive plan involving an ideology, theoretical and conceptual frameworks as well as institutional reforms from the bottom-top.

There have been far too many vague and indecisive statements regarding '1Malaysia' and I fervently hope and pray that Najib will set up a team of qualified professionals to produce brick-by-brick 'blueprint' within the next six months.

Any further delays may well qualify for the lament in Shakespeare's Macbeth - 'full of sound and fury-signifying nothing'.