

DATE: 6/12/ 2010

'Equal partners in serving the people'

The following is a translation of the policy speech by Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the 2010 BN Convention

*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim
Assalamualaikum Warah-
matullahi Wabarakatuh,
Salam Sejahtera dan Salam
IMalaysia.
YigeMalaysia (Mandarin)...
Oray Malaysia (Tamil)...
NdiMalaysia (Bidayuh)...
Ji Malaysia (Orang Ulu)...
Ise' Malaysia (Kadazan
& Dusun)...
Saumi Malaysia (Murut)...
or Sato Malaysia (Iban)*

Ladies & Gentlemen,

First of all, let us together give unreserved thanks because we are able to gather here this morning at the lovely Dewan San Choon, with full of togetherness, tremendous commitment and in a harmonious atmosphere.

It is without doubt that at this convention today, we demonstrate to the world that as Malaysian citizens, we stand united, indivisible with one purpose, that of building a better future. What is important for us, as we come from various races, religions and cultures, we are able to gather in a big way without any fear, worry or being despondent in terms of our personal safety.

We have proven wrong the prophets of doom and gloom who had always been predicting and forecasting that Malaysia will be destroyed because of our multi-ethnicity.

Indeed, whatever our skin colour, whatever our religious beliefs, whatever our socio-economic position and wherever we are, we remain united under the umbrella of IMalaysia.

It is clear Malaysia has been blessed with an abundance of peace for us to come this far. In many other countries with multi-ethnic societies in this world, they had been pock-marked with crisis and conflict, and the road taken by Malaysia is indeed special. We have pioneered a long journey and had managed our diversity successfully.

Our greatest achievement had been our ability to turn the challenges of our diversity or "a potential Achilles heel" to one of "competitive advantage". It is here that whether we are aware or not, it is not a small or ordinary achievement, but on the other hand, it is a very sig-



Datuk Seri Najib Razak says Malaysians have successfully turned the challenges of their diversity into 'competitive advantages'. – NST picture by Effendy Rashid

nificant or monumental achievement in the history of the making of Malaysia.

In short, this success is impressive because we did not take the easy road by adhering to the "melting pot" approach in nation-building, where the existing differences need to be forcibly sacrificed and a single identity created. We did not attempt to wipe out any culture nor try to change the origins of anyone. Even up till today, everyone is free to strengthen one's identity.

For example, if one's name is Samy Vellu, there is no need to change to Suhaimi or Sazali. If it is Chua Soi Lek, there is no necessity to change it to Salleh, So'ud or Ayoub. If it is John Ambrose, John Ambrose it will be, no need to change to Johan Ambrose.

Even the Orang Asli are free to continue with their own identity. As a matter of fact, we should be proud that we are the only nation in the world that allows the establishment of national schools that continue with the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

This clearly shows that Malaysian citizens are not only

tolerant towards multi-ethnicity but have also moved a step forward to celebrate this diversity. We have chosen a path that is fair and equitable by applying the integration approach where the unique differences are combined in one big family, which is always mutually reinforcing and supporting one another, and not about destroying the identities of any one race.

After our last convention in 1995, we are gathered here this morning where representatives from 13 component parties from all 13 states and the federal territories, drawn from various races, are seated together with one determination, oneness of heart and oneness of objective to ensure that the well-being of the people is given priority.

In addition, the convention this time is held at Wisma MCA, as a sign that we are equal partners in serving the people. Indeed, we are committed partners in our endeavour to serve the Malaysian people.

It is said that we stand on the shoulders of giants, our forefathers had been the pioneers. They had pioneered the ultimate legacy, in this respect, a

mechanism in power sharing and political cooperation among the various races which has proven to be very effective, very practical and able to stand the test of time.

It is indeed that our predecessors had been visionary political geniuses. They had succeeded in overcoming the deception and trickery of the British colonialists with their divide-and-rule policy.

Whether we are aware or not, throughout the colonial rule, our people had been subtly divided in accordance to race, by the places we lived in, the type of work we did and our education. The objective of the colonialists was that ultimately all races would have to depend on them as the so-called impartial referee.

As a result, at that time, leaders such as the late Datuk Onn (Jaffar) were aware of this fact and tried to overcome it by trying to open Umno's membership to various races for a start, and later, through Parti Kemerdekaan Tanah Melayu or the IMP led by him, but this too, failed.