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TN50 must embed social, political and economic aspirations

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located from the point of view of the new approach to development, as being espoused by Indian economist Amartya Sen, and the beginning of the creation of a new form of social order to emerge by 2050, 30 years from 2020.

In its most basic element, Sen sees freedom as development as it lifts human capabilities to function optimally. This is crucial to Sen's philosophy of development — development will lead to happiness, which is similar to the concept of wellbeing, the ultimate aim of the NTP. And, in the 2017 Budget, Najib also introduced the concept of public happiness, which will complement the individual happiness as seen by Sen. Looking from Sen's mode of analysis, we can expect a new form of social system to emerge by 2050, one which transcends simple economics and involves the interaction of economic and non-economic factors.

Now that the conceptual framework for TN50 has been explored, what are the things we would like to see in 2050, politically, economically and socially? Politically, it is my dream to see TN50 serve as an embryonic discourse to achieve what political scientists term "post-ethnic nationalism". I would like to see a more mature democracy where not just difference of opinion is allowed, but more importantly, the strengthening and flourishing of the civil society movement.

For the economy, I would like to see the full potential of the digital economy, where we are not just the end user of technology, but at the forefront of inventing it through innovation and creativity. We need to fully utilise the presence of our digital economic adviser, Jack Ma, and other initiatives towards this end, especially under the 2017 Budget. We have to learn from the past. Remember, Bill Gates was one of the members of our Multimedia Super Corridor International Advisory Panel way back in the 1990s.

And, finally, socially, we can ultimately see the concept of 1Malaysia to be a reality, where inclusive nationalism takes root, where Malaysians can project the eight core values of 1Malaysia in their value system and attitude, which, among others, are the culture of excellence, humility and integrity.

They say a thousand miles' journey begins with a step. TN50 is the first step, the crucial step for a greater Malaysia to come. Let's get the ball rolling now.

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