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TN50, a vision beyond 2020

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NEW PATHWAY: It is a first, crucial step towards building a greater Malaysia

“FROM now on, TN50 is our lucky charm. Let the old legacy pass. The future of Malaysia, we recreate.” That’s a quote from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak when he introduced the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) during the tabling of the 2017 Budget in October, which sets the course for a new way forward for Malaysia.

“Far from destroying or replacing Vision 2020, TN50 focuses on ‘what’s next after 2020’.



And, as expected, critics have pointed their guns at this new initiative, which has yet to kick off in the first place. At least two leading criticisms of TN50 are worthy of scrutiny.

ONE, TN50 is seen as a means to destroy and, ultimately, replace Vision 2020; and,

TWO, that it is not in line with the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP).

Do these two arguments have merit?

As far as Malaysian economic management and planning are concerned, the arguments appear to be spurious at best. I will elaborate.

It is important to note that from the budget point of view, we have



The concept of 1Malaysia can be a reality in the National Transformation 2050 agenda.

only two more budgets before arriving at Vision 2020 — the 2018 and 2019 Budgets — whereas the 2020 Budget, which will be announced in 2019, will be the first budget for Malaysia as a developed and high-income country. Should we wait until the 2020 Budget to announce a new vision for Malaysia? Would that not be too late to call? Isn’t announcing it now apt and the right way to go? Far from destroying or replacing Vision 2020, TN50 focuses on “what’s next after 2020”.

Next, TN50 goes against the 11MP direction. Again, this is misleading as the final chapter of the 11MP, which is chapter 10, is about preparing a vision for Malaysia beyond 2020. It gives a glimpse of

Malaysia’s aspirations post-2020, which come from the voices of the rakyat, especially youth. So, how can TN50 contradict the 11MP since it is clearly in line with it, in terms of charting the path of Malaysia beyond 2020?

But before we project what we want for Malaysia come 2050, TN50 must first be put in a proper framework of analysis and a suitable operational definition so that we can have a common understanding of what TN50 is. Since by 2020 we are already a developed nation, or at least that is the narrative since Vision 2020 was articulated in February 1991, TN50 should represent much more than an advanced economic development discourse. It must go beyond the typical ap-

proach to economic development and the typical framework of class-based ethnic ideology when analysing the politics and economics of Malaysia.

As a nascent discourse and a post-2020 vision, its populist message must lie in generating a shared sentiment of national transformation, which upholds the Federal Constitution, Rukun Negara, and the Malaysia Agreement as foundations. Hence, TN50 must be constructed as a symbol of national unity to invoke a *vox populi* (voice of the people) of the Malaysian dream, a sense of belonging and common purpose for all Malaysians. And, in the context of the National Transformation Policy (NTP), TN50 should be

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