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We are Malaysians, there is no turning back

GROWING up in a multi-racial environment for the past 68 years, it was joy and fun going to school and playing soccer, ball chop, basketball, *sepak takraw*, *kuchi-masuk*, marbles, kiting and spinning tops with my classmates.

At school, we took part in athletics to garner additional points for our house to have a bigger lead during the actual sports day.

Our school built our team to be competitive and loyal.

We never thought of ourselves as Malay, Indian or Chinese.

We were protective of each other when we represented our school in the inter-school games.

In school, we helped our friends who were weak in Mathematics or science.

In fact, we allowed those who forgot or had problems completing their homework even though it was wrong to do so.

We sometimes acted as teachers in tutoring our classmates on their assignments.

We considered friends as members of a more prominent family whatever race or religious background they came from.

We were taught by our parents to support, respect and foster unity as one Malaysian family or one Malaysia,

not east or west Malaysia.

The moral of the story is that we should treat each other with mutual respect and love.

Until today, we maintain that strong bond when we meet at our old boys' and girls' school dinners, we respect our teachers, coaches and even the school gardeners or school guards.

Nothing will separate us despite our cultural and religious backgrounds. We believe in unity in diversity.

Our future lies with the policies of the new unity government.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as our 10th Prime Minister wants his team of ministers and deputy ministers, Sabah and Sarawak to move ahead with Peninsular Malaysia as one big family to preserve our solidarity and sovereignty as truly Malaysia.

The guiding principle of one Malaysia or family is respect, trust and loyalty, despite the country's political landscape whether in sports, college or the workplace.

Now there have been murmurs by some disgruntled politicians and opposition leaders about their agenda.

Anwar's leadership mettle and the selection of two deputy Prime Ministers Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof have paved the way for better trust

and union.

They have done this by having an open attitude and more engagements, empowerment and dialogues, working in tandem as Malaysians to produce innovative and creative ideas for our country's development, and to be competitive while attempting to reduce our national debt by attracting more foreign direct investment, which in turn creates jobs for our youths to be better skilled in this IR4.0 technology-driven world.

We must choose to recognise each community's strengths, skills, ideas and creativity of every Malaysian.

Political leaders, non-governmental organisations, teachers, parents and community leaders play a vital role in planting the seeds of respect, tolerance and interaction while the government through its policies and actions in achieving national unity.

It is crucial. Unity and harmony should be embedded in the culture of our children from diverse races and religious backgrounds while inculcating interaction and participation in sports, games and cultural activities unconditionally for the sake of nation-building.

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