

**Najib hopes for strong mandate in GE**  
**New Straits Times**  
**07 October 2012**

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak hopes that he will be given a strong mandate in the upcoming 13th general election to continue to deliver to the people and make Malaysia a fully developed nation by 2020.

Najib, speaking in an interview with 'CNBC Conversation' hosted by renowned anchor Martin Soong that was aired on Astro CNBC (Channel 518) today, said the next five years were very crucial for the government to fulfill commitments and promises made by previous leaders to the nation.

"I'd like to have a strong mandate, Martin. Because to achieve our vision of a fully developed nation by 2020, the next five years would be very crucial. Crucial, because you're talking about the last lap.

"You're talking about going down the stretch and this is the most critical part because we really have to deliver, " he said.

Najib was responding to a question as to how important the upcoming election was for him and also the importance of receiving a fresh mandate especially in transforming Malaysia into a developed country by 2020.

He said the transformation was a firm commitment made by the then prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the early 90s with his (Najib's) predecessor Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi implementing part of it, and now it was his turn to deliver to the people.

To a question, Najib, who is also Finance Minister, agreed that achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth without upsetting the political landscape too much was one the challenges Malaysia faced in becoming a developed nation.

However, he stressed that the key to make Malaysian society more equitable was to get growth to redistribute income back to the people.

"Without growth, it will be a lose-lose situation. So if we get five to six per cent within the time frame, then we will be able to at the same time, ensure a more fair and equitable distribution of wealth in this country.

In the 30-minute interview, Najib said the move (to get growth) was working and that the numbers were looking more positive in terms of Bumiputera participation.

"...but it's not just about the equity numbers. We must also make sure that there is a fair distribution of income between the different levels of income groups in this country," he said.

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Source: <http://www.nst.com.my/latest/najib-hopes-for-strong-mandate-in-ge-1.153369#>