

Speech at the Launch of The Foreign Policy Framework of The New Malaysia

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1. First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for according me the honour to officially launch the Foreign Policy Framework of the New Malaysia. It is indeed a pleasure to see the presence of so many distinguished guests this afternoon to commemorate yet another milestone in the history of Wisma Putra.

2. This Framework, to my mind, has captured the essence of the foreign policy direction of the current administration. More importantly, it has also captured the salient issues that I raised in my speech at the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly last year.

3. Essentially, the basic elements of our foreign policy remain unchanged. Malaysia continues to pursue an independent, principled and pragmatic

foreign policy, founded on the values of peace, humanity, justice, and equality. Malaysia also believes in maintaining friendly relations with all countries, peaceful resolution of disputes based on international law and norms.

4. Despite that, Malaysia reserves the right to express its opinion and if necessary, its protestations, against injustices, oppressions and other crimes against humanity that is committed by any nations. Malaysia had never shied away from what it believes to be a responsibility and commitment to mankind.

5. What is changing is the way Malaysia approaches certain issues affecting our interest. Hence, the overarching theme of this Framework is 'Change in Continuity'. This will be the direction of the implementation of our foreign policy.

6. We are living in a world where changes take place at a rapid pace. These changes bring both challenges and opportunities. It is, therefore, only logical that Malaysia does not stick to the traditional methods of engagements and instead proactively seek to explore new approaches.

7. This Framework will guide Malaysia in the conduct of its foreign policy by taking the following approaches:

(i) to participate actively in discussions at various international fora where Malaysia is already a member;

(ii) to influence decision-making processes at various international fora where Malaysia is not a member and

(iii) to shape the discourse on emerging issues such as Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0) and the blue economy.

8. The Framework is a living document. It serves as a guide to Wisma Putra and as a main reference to those who are interested in Malaysia's Foreign Policy.

9. While the realm of foreign policy is the international sphere, it cannot be detached from the domestic realities. Simply put, foreign policy begins at home. In this regard, foreign policy cannot be effective if it contradicts the expectations and realities of the domestic environment. Therefore, I need to stress the importance of inter-agency cooperation in implementing policies formulated by the government.

10. I am happy to note that this Framework is a result of the thorough and comprehensive reviews and assessments, including consultations with various interested parties. Let me underline that this participatory approach has become the cornerstone of the current government in upholding and promoting cardinal principles such as transparency, openness and good governance.

11. Multilateralism is under threat. We see powerful countries unilaterally imposing their will on others. Malaysia is extremely concerned over this development. We also see countries flagrantly violate international agreements and United Nations resolutions. The developments in Palestine and Jammu – Kashmir are some of the examples.

12. Similar trends can be observed on the trade and economic fronts. There are powerful countries imposing unilateral sanctions, not respecting trade agreements and blatantly disregarding multilateral framework. These sanctions affect not only the particular country singled out, but other countries also. There is no equity here. The rich and the powerful will take what they wish but the poor and weak will yield what they must.

13. Malaysia will submit what it must but it will be under open protest.

14. Before I conclude, let me once again congratulate YB Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah for the hard work which went into the drafting and publishing of this Foreign Policy Framework of the New Malaysia. I am confident that this living document will be a valuable source of reference not just to Malaysian diplomats but also to all interested parties as well.

15. The challenges are huge and the stakes are high. Malaysia will nevertheless remain steadfast in pursuing its foreign policy goals based on the principles of justice and fairness. I am optimistic that we will be able to achieve these goals.

16. On that note, it is with great pleasure that I officially launch the Foreign Policy Framework of the New Malaysia.

Thank you.

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