

# JOINT ELECTION MANIFESTO

Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS)  
Parti Keadilan Rakyat (keADILan)  
Democratic Action Party (DAP)

## TOWARDS A JUST MALAYSIA

### 1. Our Biggest Challenge Since Independence

The biggest challenge facing the people of Malaysia is the creation of a just and democratic country.

#### **Political crisis**

We have in our country today a government which concentrates power in the Executive, in a single individual in particular, thus crippling our system of checks and balances. When power becomes so concentrated and personalised:

- the interests of those in power become paramount, the interests of the people are ignored;
- those in power determine everything, including what is supposedly the interests of the people;
- the people are paralysed and human rights violations become rampant;
- those in power do not respect nor consider the differing views of others; instead they are vilified, including with fabricated accusations;
- blind loyalty to the leadership is expected, even when the leadership is wrong, and
- the principles and practice of public accountability are ignored and in the process institutions are undermined.

#### **Oppression, Corruption, Cronyism and Nepotism**

This is why OPPRESSION, CORRUPTION, CRONYISM and NEPOTISM have grown over these past few years. To conceal these sins, those in power have had to manipulate and lie to the people. From the 1980s, the NEP has been an excuse to practise cronyism and nepotism in business and

politics. Undeniably, many Malaysians, especially Malays, have benefited from the NEP. But cronyism and nepotism today is not because of the NEP; instead, under the guise of the NEP, it has been used to benefit a few individuals, Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera alike. Slander and persecution of political opponents has become the norm among those in power and has become more blatant in the current political crisis.

### **Economic crisis**

Due to the reluctance to implement real political and economic reforms, Malaysia is still unable to meet the full challenge of globalisation. Yet, the future of the country depends upon its competitiveness and capacity to penetrate the global market. A system of corporate governance within a transparent regulatory framework free from political interference on behalf of vested interests is urgently needed to create a resilient economy. Corruption, cronyism and nepotism under the BN government has served to cripple our economic competitiveness and mortgaged our future.

Furthermore, the BN government abuses government expenditure to blackmail and 'buy' the people in the run-up to the General Elections. Government revenues come from the efforts and income of the people. They are not the private property of the BN. The use of government revenues to improve the life of the people is a right. The BN has absolutely no right to abuse it to satisfy their desire to remain in power.

### **Human Rights Abuses**

The BN administration has violated the basic principles and rights guaranteed under the Malaysian Constitution. Laws such as the Internal Security Act, the Printing and Publications Act, the Universities and University Colleges Act, the Police Act and others deny the people the basic right of expression, peaceful assembly and association. These basic rights are allowed or disallowed on the whims of those in power. Even the right of the people to turn to the Courts for redress is thwarted. Police discipline has deteriorated significantly as a result of the abuse of power by the country's top leadership. This has resulted in abuses, including police violence towards ordinary citizens. Such abuses reflect the gangsterism of the top leadership, who have no respect for the basic human rights guaranteed to us under the Malaysian Constitution.

### **Moral crisis**

The concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few leaders has resulted in such arrogance that they are capable of shamelessly doing anything to maintain their hold on power. The level of morality of the national leadership has deteriorated alarmingly. The younger generation is disillusioned and can no longer respect the leaders.

### **Crisis of Integrity**

The integrity of a number of public institutions such as Parliament, the judiciary, the civil service, police and the media have been undermined as all have had to submit to the whims of certain leaders. This has badly affected the well-being of the people and shaken the confidence of investors, both domestic and foreign. Only a change towards a just, clean, efficient, trustworthy administration can restore administrative and institutional integrity and the confidence and unity of the people, bringing progress once more to our nation and country.

### **Barisan Nasional Lies**

The BN administration has:

- breached the principles and aspirations enshrined in documents of their own creation, principles such as the Rule of Law and a democratic way of life as contained in the Rukunegara;
- neglected their responsibility to implement the nine challenges of Vision 2020, specifically the challenge “to create a society that is truly ethical” and that of “creating a caring society”;
- failed to make a reality of their own slogans – such as “clean, efficient and trustworthy”, “leadership by example”, “tradition of championing the people”, and so on;
- become ever more mendacious as shown by the many statements and accusations of the leadership.

### **The People’s Aspirations Neglected**

A number of basic needs and aspirations of the people require urgent attention:

- a large segment of those in the low- and middle-income bracket are unable to afford suitable housing;
- a significant proportion of qualified students still cannot obtain access to affordable and quality higher education locally. Quality education for all who are qualified is a responsibility of the government and is necessary if the country is to prosper;
- quality medical care, free or at a reasonable cost, is still not accessible to a significant segment of the people.

In addition, the people are aware that a strong economy and a decent material standard of life is not everything; cultural and spiritual progress and a healthy environment are also

necessary.

Evidently, the well-being of the ordinary people is not a priority in the current orientation of the BN government. The people have high hopes and aspirations for balanced development and social equality; the ruling elite places greater importance on mega-projects and boastful, ego-inflating constructions which primarily benefit a handful of people. As a result:

- the gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ has increased significantly in the 1990s;
- an increasing number and proportion of the people are marginalised by the process of economic development. This is not only unjust, it hinders the emergence of Malaysia as a fully developed nation;
- the BN government’s development policy gives greater emphasis to material profits and neglects the balance between the material, cultural, ethical, spiritual, and civilisational aspects.

## **2. The People’s Awareness**

The people have become increasingly conscious of the defects in the BN’s development policy and the shortcomings of the BN leadership. Dissent is more and more openly expressed. In response, the BN government has attempted to frighten the people by threatening that such dissent will result in racial conflict. They threaten that chaos will result should the strong position of the BN government be questioned. They have mobilised the mainstream mass media which is completely under their control, and have used it to vilify the dissent, spreading lies and fear. Their sole aim is to cause fear and disunity. They hope their campaign of lies and fear-mongering will prevent the people from coming together for change towards a just and democratic nation.

To deflect popular discontent, the BN government attempts to manipulate racial sentiments. They foster mutual suspicion between the racial groups and create antagonisms between one group and another. The BN highlights racial strife in other countries where the situation is utterly different and of no relevance to us. The BN leadership also slanders the Alternative Front parties as agents of foreign powers and interests – while claiming that foreign investors have no confidence in the alternative parties and will run away if the BN is not massively returned to power. But they also try to scapegoat foreign powers for their own failure in managing the country’s economy. The people are no longer so easily fooled by those who have for a long time collaborated with foreign powers from both West and East.

This mischievous game of divide-and-rule is increasingly ineffective.

### **3. The Alternative Front: A Just and Democratic Malaysia**

#### **Historical event**

Today, Malaysians of all races are resolute in their desire for change. Malaysians of all levels of society are determined to give birth to a system of governance that:

- is honest, dynamic and truly accountable;
- has a truly democratic parliamentary system that represents their interests;
- has truly independent and clean judicial institutions;
- has a police force which is professional and executes its duties in a just and fair manner, according to the tenets of law;
- has a mass media that is free and not beholden to those in power;
- values accountability and transparency as its fundamental elements;
- respects differences of views, using them to correct mistakes arising from human shortcomings;
- supports a dynamic, resilient and just economy which is also internationally competitive.

The just and democratic society that we aspire to must be built upon the fundamental spiritual and ethical values that are part of the teachings of Islam and other religions. The practice of Islam as a way of life (*ad-deen*) and the affirmation of spiritual values – in individuals and in society as a whole – will provide the bastion against corruption, unbridled greed and moral decay. Towards this goal, the institution of the family as the fundamental unit of society will be reinforced. We shall strengthen other social institutions to provide the foundation of a new Malaysian civilisation. We shall seek to develop policies and programs in every area of life incorporating universal ethical and spiritual principles. Among these, the principle of justice shall be paramount.

The BN government champions political and economic justice at the international level, but not at home. This shows their insincerity and inconsistency. They should be even more committed to uphold the principles and practice of

justice in Malaysia itself. By only championing international justice they are making us a laughing stock.

### **Our Pledge**

We pledge to uphold and respect the fundamental principles of the Malaysian Constitution, namely:

- Constitutional sovereignty;
- Constitutional monarchy;
- Parliamentary democracy;
- Fundamental freedoms;
- The rule of law;
- Judicial independence;
- The rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
- The position of Islam as the religion of the Federation, coupled with the principle of the freedom of worship;
- The position of Bahasa Melayu as the national language, the language of knowledge and the official language, whilst safeguarding the right to use and learn other languages;
- The special position of the Malays and the Bumiputera of Sabah and Sarawak, and the legitimate rights of other races; and
- A federal administrative system that fulfills its responsibilities, and protection and respect for the special position of Sabah and Sarawak.

We therefore pledge that we shall:

- be with the people's struggle to create a just and prosperous Malaysian nation based on a truly democratic system of government;
- protect and defend the rights and dignity of all the people and guarantee justice for all;
- act to enhance economic prosperity through greater productivity, efficiency, and sound economic management in order to enable the country to face global challenges;
- channel the country's resources not only to meet the

basic needs of the people but, more importantly, to ensure that the quality of life and social harmony are enhanced;

- distribute wealth and opportunities fairly among all;
- develop quality social infrastructure and a clean and comfortable physical environment; enhance the quality of education, health and other social services; build mosques and other places of worship; build public parks and libraries; build arts and cultural centres; and provide the widest opportunities for information technology and other methods of communication; and
- create a favourable atmosphere – through the provision of infrastructure, education and legislation – towards affirmation of Islam as a way of life (*ad-deen*) among Muslims, while ensuring the rights of non-Muslims to practice their respective religions or beliefs.

# PLAN AND PROGRAMME

## 1. Our Programme

Behind the facade of addressing the economic crisis, the top leadership of UMNO and the Barisan Nasional has opportunistically sought to save their interests and the interests of their cronies. They have sought to enhance their power and control over the corporate sector, the banks and indeed the stock brokerages.

Such abuses of power have retarded our economic recovery, even as compared to some of our neighbours whose economic fundamentals were much weaker than ours.

Nevertheless, the challenge is not just that of economic recovery. It is the establishment of a national development and regulatory framework which is commensurate with the developing global economy.

The Alternative Front will introduce measures to encourage investment and growth within a liberal and flexible framework without sacrificing the long-term interests of the nation. We firmly believe that Malaysia's future lies in full participation in the global economy. However, we are committed to ensuring that there are adequate safeguards to protect Malaysia from becoming a victim of global capital market forces. We will pursue domestic policies to prevent the creation of a bubble economy vulnerable to external events and predatory market forces. Cronyism, corruption and targeted interventions on behalf of vested interests which create such distortions will be eliminated.

We are committed to taking all necessary measures to restore the economy to full health based on sound macro-economic policies, strengthening institutions and acting in a transparent manner. We will ensure that the most vulnerable groups in our society are provided with a safety net and assisted to re-establish themselves. We further pledge that the rich and well connected friends of the regime will not receive unwarranted and privileged support.

As an open and vulnerable economy, we recognise the need to strengthen our economic foundations by adopting consistent measures and policies that enhance our competitiveness, strengthen our ability to withstand adverse international trends and protect our national interests. We are committed to correcting the various distortions that developed during the rapid growth of the decade leading up

to the economic crisis so as to ensure sustainable growth.

Towards this end, the Alternative Front will establish an Economic and Social Consultative Council to mobilise both the private and public sectors, as well as society in general, to ensure that policies adopted are consonant with the interests of the nation and have the full support and cooperation of the people.

Strategically, we are committed to propelling Malaysia towards an information and knowledge-based economy. We shall not abandon the traditional sectors of agriculture and industry but will adopt measures to further modernize and strengthen them. However, wealth-creation in the global economy is increasingly in services. As a small nation with a small population, Malaysia must partake in that trend and re-orientate ourselves from the troubled heavy industries of Mahathir. Our future prosperity is dependent on this dual thrust.

To achieve this objective, we shall invest in our people and equip them with the necessary knowledge, mental agility and creativity.

This strategic objective is closely linked to the establishment of a just and democratic nation to unleash the nation's potential. It requires a new and comprehensive approach towards education. It requires individuals who can control and discipline themselves, not just submit to authority. Only such self-control and self-discipline can provide a sound foundation to morality in this era of information technology.

At the same time, international developments clearly show that the emerging global economy is merciless and can have adverse effects in the form of a widening income gap both within a country and between countries. We will be fully attentive to such negative consequences.

## **2. Action plan**

Based on the above principles, and with the people's mandate, we will initiate measures towards a democratic, transparent, accountable and ethical system of government that will provide the environment for a strong and sustainable economic recovery, for social harmony and prosperity, and for a country that will be truly respected. We will institute measures to:

- strengthen the national economy;
- enhance administrative transparency and accountability;
- create a new social contract;
- promote national unity;
- build a genuine democracy;

- restore the image and position of Malaysia in the global arena,

as a step towards our long-term objective of a just and progressive society which:

- fulfills the physical, mental and spiritual potential of its people
- is politically mature
- is caring
- is creative
- is balanced in its values and orientation
- truly contributes to the re-awakening of Asia in the comprehensive sense, and not just economically and technologically

## **A. Strengthening the economy**

### **(1) Reducing the people's burden**

We intend to reduce the burden on the people. As a start, we will:

#### **Reduce the tax burden**

- Raise the level of personal income tax exemption, in addition to increasing child allowance to a reasonable level;
- Raise the level of personal income tax deduction for wives who are full-time home makers in recognition of their important contribution;
- Raise the level of service tax exemption to a turnover exceeding one million ringgit a year;
- Review the tax system with the objective of strengthening government revenues while reducing the tax burden on the people, especially the low- and middle-income groups.

#### **Eradicate absolute poverty**

- Eradicate absolute poverty by the middle of the next parliamentary term;
- Reduce poverty levels in the next parliamentary term to half the levels of 1999;
- Improve poverty eradication programmes so that they are free from political interference and truly help the poor;
- Streamline various existing poverty eradication programmes;

- Narrow the income and wealth gap without infringing on legitimate rights.

#### **Assist small traders and hawkers**

- End the practice of using the licensing of small traders and hawkers as a source of revenue and as a party political tool, and instead use it purely for management and regulatory purposes to safeguard the well-being and health of the people, small traders and hawkers;
- Provide comfortable, clean and attractive infrastructure and facilities for hawkers.

#### **Improve public transport services**

- Improve the quality of public transport and reduce fares to a level commensurate with the people's living standards;
- Issue taxi permits to individual entrepreneurs and their cooperatives, rather than to large companies;
- Enhance the efficiency and quality of taxi services by private entrepreneurs through the establishment of cooperatives, associations, councils and the like;
- Reduce the fares of domestic flights between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak to promote national unity and domestic tourism;
- Modernise and enhance rail services in Peninsular Malaysia;
- Develop the road system in Sabah and Sarawak;
- Provide suitable facilities and regulations to reduce of road accidents and enhance public road safety;
- Study the possibility of new forms of public transport in the main towns to improve the quality of urban life;
- Provide more orderly and reasonably-priced school services bus to reduce the burden on parents.

### **(2) A dynamic and just growth**

For a more dynamic and competitive economy, we need to enhance domestic demand and productive, not wasteful, domestic investment. We shall:

- Review the existing regulatory framework and address its weaknesses;

- Enhance private sector corporate governance, transparency and responsibility, and end the abuse of the banking and finance sector;
- Give priority to projects which generate the greatest benefit to the people, projects such as medium and low-cost housing, modernisation of the railway system, road projects in Sabah and Sarawak, and others;
- Halt mega-projects which are wasteful, environmentally destructive and of little or no benefit to the people;
- Enhance economic opportunities for all by giving specific emphasis and appropriate support to groups that are weak, and effective support to local businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Ensure that economic development is equitable and sustainable, and does not threaten social integrity or destroy the environment and natural resources;
- Develop special development programmes for the poor and the low income in traditional villages, new villages and estates so that they are brought into the mainstream of development and provided with better income sources, jobs and title to land;
- Ensure that special privileges are not abused to enrich only a small elite of those in power and their cronies.

### **Strengthening industry**

We shall define an industrial policy that aims to strengthen competitiveness, aim for greater geographical dispersal of industry, and tap the potential of resource based industries while seeking to move to hi-tech and information- and knowledge-based industries. We shall seek to:

- Modernise and expand high productivity industries to increase the country's economic competitiveness and to encourage high-value exports;
- Address our technological weaknesses, in particular the technology gap between the backward and the advanced industries;
- Ensure that large projects, including heavy industry projects, are managed in an integrated manner and in line with a practical industrial development master

plan;

- Provide incentives and greater support for small and medium-sized industries;
- Encourage, by means of appropriate incentive schemes, further linkages between local, especially small and medium-sized industries, and large international corporations in order to accelerate technology transfer to local industries and increase the use of local inputs;
- Support local entrepreneurs and encourage the upgrading of local skills and human resource capacity;
- Utilise foreign capital, expertise, markets and technology in order to reinforce local economic fundamentals;
- Enhance the role of science and technology by strengthening basic science education and developing appropriate technical training facilities;
- Increase and improve the efficiency of financial allocations and other incentives for scientific and technological research and development.

### **Strengthening small and medium-sized agriculture and fisheries**

The BN government has overlooked the importance of the agricultural sector in general, and the fate and problems of smallholders in particular. We will rectify this and give appropriate attention to a basic sector of the economy, one which actually saved the Malaysian economy during the worst period of the economic crisis. We will work towards the following:

- Enhance food production for the security and stability of the country;
- More research in agriculture, particularly in areas of high technology, food crops and the industrial use of agricultural output;
- Protect biodiversity and encourage research in biodiversity conservation and the use of natural products;
- A review of FELDA, FELCRA, RISDA, MAJU IKAN and other agriculture and fisheries development agencies to improve management and technology use for the benefit of settlers, farmers

and fishermen;

- Restructuring government monopolies to become more efficient, effective and market-driven;
- Firm implementation of laws regulating fisheries exclusion zones to protect in-shore fishermen against encroachment by large fishing vessels and trawlers which cause extensive damage to coastal fisheries resources;
- Development of idle land.

### **Information technology and economy for all**

Malaysians realise the growing importance of information technology (IT) in the national and global economy and the Mahathir leadership has given it plenty of attention. However, there remain huge lacuna and gaps that have to be addressed, for instance that between the rural and the urban, and between the rich and poor. Failure to address these gaps will see the country falling behind in a rapidly developing area, with disastrous consequences. We shall endeavour to:

- Speed-up the installation of telecommunications and electricity infrastructure nationwide and seek to reduce usage costs;
- Expand information technology (IT) education in all schools, beginning with primary schools;
- Develop more effective IT appreciation programmes for the general public;
- Launch a “One Village, One IT Centre” programme by giving appropriate incentives to encourage the dissemination of information technology facilities to small towns and rural areas;
- Make compulsory information technology infrastructure planning in all new housing schemes, including low and medium cost housing, and push for the modernisation of the infrastructure in existing housing schemes;
- Negotiate with software manufacturers to obtain cheaper software for the local market.

### **Prioritising small and medium enterprises**

Small and medium enterprises can play an important role in economic recovery and in the diversification and deepening of the industrial structure of the economy. However, the current institutional framework needs to be reorganised to truly support business development and expansion. Targetted support will need to be given to encourage the

continued upgrading of the production technology and services of small and medium enterprises, as well as their productivity. In this connection we need to:

- Establish an investment fund, under-written by the government, for the development of small and medium enterprises and allocated according to performance and not political favouritism.

### **Reorganising the privatisation policy framework**

The Barisan Nasional's privatisation policy and its implementation have been greatly abused to enrich a small coterie of friends (cronyism) and families (nepotism). Private monopolies have replaced public monopolies and the people are burdened with rising costs. A regulatory framework to protect public interests is either absent or ineffective.

Privatisation can, with care, benefit national development but the current policy and its implementation needs an overhaul. If the private sector can manage services and develop projects more efficiently at lower cost, the private sector can be invited to take over from the public sector, as long as public interests are not sacrificed as under the BN.

The current weaknesses will be rectified through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms.

- Details of privatisation contracts to be made public in the interests of transparency. The interests of consumers and workers, and the rights of the people, will be safeguarded. All future privatisations to be conducted on the basis of competitive bids;
- Ensure that public monopolies do not become private monopolies;
- Basic public facilities and services – such as water, education, health and public housing – will only be corporatised to improve management but will not be privatised;
- Public enterprises that have already been privatised will be monitored closely to safeguard public interests. Enterprises that have been privatised will not be re-nationalised but any invalid contracts can be terminated in the interest of the people and the country;
- Establish an independent commission to audit all large privatised projects in the interests of transparency and accountability.

### **Strengthening the financial system**

A sound financial system is critical to the economic health of the nation. An effective supervisory and regulatory regime is critical to safeguarding the integrity and viability of the banking and financial sector. As a further step, we shall establish a new system to monitor and regulate the flow of funds so as to avoid a repeat of the 1997-1998 crisis.

We shall streamline the financial system in the country so that:

- it is just, transparent and accountable and does not conflict with Islamic values;
- encourage and promote investment and credit facilities to productive sectors and not to speculation;
- rehabilitate the image, prestige and integrity of Bank Negara;
- ensure that Federal expenditure is channeled particularly to enhance the standard of living of the poor, and to interior and rural areas which are still marginalised.

The tax system will be scrutinised with the aim of using it to encourage consumers and industrialists to be more environmentally-friendly. Among the aspects to be attended to shall be the desirability of a tax on speculative profits, a reduction on the tax burden on income from wages, salaries and dividends, and natural resource taxes to encourage careful exploitation and use.

We shall also review the present arrangements for Federal/State revenue sharing to ensure greater equity and to preclude the Federal Government from penalizing states under an opposing party.

## **B. Increase Transparency and Accountability**

### **(1) Towards democratic and just politics**

The need for a more democratic government is pressing. Transparency and accountability must be integrated into all aspects of administration, without damaging efficiency.

We will work towards the decentralization of power to the local level so that state governments will be more involved in their respective states' development.

We will seek to:

- Strengthen the authority of Parliament by a system

of all-party permanent committees with the power to name the Attorney General, the Chief Justice and other judges, the Inspector General of Police, the Governor of Bank Negara, who will be appointed by the Yang diPertuan Agong according to the Constitution;

- Limit the term of office of the Prime Minister, the Menteri Besar and Chief Minister to two terms;
- Guarantee freedom of the press so that they can monitor and expose any corruption and abuse of power;
- Implement effectively all existing laws that presently require a public hearing before any project is implemented or any regulation amended, such as the Environmental Protection Act, property re-valuation, and so forth;
- Review the method of appointing members to the Senate with the objective of introducing a method which reflects the interests of all the people;
- Reintroduce elections for local government so that local leaders can be made accountable;
- Introduce an ombudsman system for a more independent and effective public complaints body;
- Protect by law any individual or group that exposes mismanagement, abuse of power and corruption especially at the highest levels;
- Make the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) an independent body protected by the constitution and directly responsible to Parliament; the ACA must be headed by a prominent person of standing;
- Make compulsory annual public declaration of assets by the people's representatives;
- Enhance the independence and authority of the Elections Commission by giving full power to Parliament to appoint the Chairman and other members of the Commission through a process of open hearing;
- Clean up the voter register so that it is free from "phantom" voters, "overlapping" voters and foreign citizens;
- Reduce the voting age for Malaysian citizens to 18