

years and introduce automatic registration for all citizens;

(2) Restore the credibility of law and the judiciary

- Establish a Royal Commission to review the judiciary and legal administration in the country, and to recommend proposals to enhance the independence of the judiciary, to regulate appointment and sacking of judges and to end abuse of the law on contempt of court;
- Restore the image and status of the Royal Malaysian Police by means of a permanent committee as the Police Commission to receive and consider petitions by the people on police behaviour;
- Introduce legislation so that the Attorney General will no longer be a voting member of the Pardon's Board, but will only act an advisor and resource person to the board;
- Separate the lower judiciary from the legal services so that they are not both controlled by the Attorney General;
- Strengthen the system of checks and balances by amending all laws, such as the Printing and Publication Act etc., that presently deny the power for judicial review;
- Review the position, administration and implementation of the Shari'ah laws to guarantee that justice is implemented and the beliefs of the Muslims are protected.

(3) Restore the integrity of the public services.

Members of the country's public services possess a high level of ability and professionalism.

Under the Barisan Nasional, especially of late, the full potential of the public services has not been achieved. Their morale has declined because of the politicisation of the public services, to the point of adversely affecting their professionalism. The culture of becoming 'yes men' to political leaders has replaced the culture of integrity and service to the public.

The public services require a paradigm change and should have a proper role to manage the development and administration of the country without undue party political interference.

As such we promise to:

- Restore the integrity of the public services, by fully utilising its expertise and experience;
- Recognise members of the public services as equal partners in the effort to develop the country;
- Institute public sector reforms to raise efficiency and improve morale, work ethics, and working conditions within the public sector;
- Attempt to abolish the gap in service conditions between the public and private sectors, especially among those who have equal qualifications and carry out similar functions;
- Narrow the salary gap between the highest, medium and lower levels to set an example to the private sector;
- Encourage members of the public services to a renewed determination to serve the people and country, and not the political leaders.

C. Social Contract for a New Millennium

The obsession of the BN government to develop mega-projects and to privatise social facilities has sidelined the interests and needs of the people. It is necessary to formulate a new “social contract” between the government and the people. We recognise the right to housing, education and health as basic human rights of the people.

(1) Education

The people’s recognition of the importance of education is a national strength, underpinning the future of the people and the country.

Education is a primary means of reducing social inequality.

Schools and higher institutions of learning have been built all over the country and succeeded in educating large numbers of people. Unfortunately, many still do not have the opportunity to further their studies and realise their potential.

Furthermore, those involved in educational institutions are aware that educational facilities and standards in the country have declined, as has the morale of school teachers and lecturers in institutions of higher learning.

These trends must be stopped. Integrated development, covering both allocation and curriculum, must be given priority. The involvement of teachers and lecturers in management is critical.

The BN government is keen to privatise education and regards it as one more source of profit, as another business. But education should be more than a for-profit enterprise.

We propose to take the following measures as preliminary steps towards an educational system that meets the needs and desires of the people for education:

- Education is a fundamental responsibility of the state, although private education is allowed;
- Establish a National Education Consultative Council to ensure that the practice and implementation of the national education policy and philosophy is both effective and just;
- Stop the privatisation of public institutions of higher learning and review the implementation of the corporatisation policy so that it adheres to the principles of education and not financial gain;
- Allocate the education budget in a fair and equitable fashion, without neglecting any group;
- Provide more scholarships and other financial assistance on the basis of need;
- Increase nursery and kindergarten facilities, especially for the lower income group;
- Guarantee access to compulsory and free and compulsory education at the primary and secondary levels;
- Improve standards and facilities for schools in the interior, especially in Sabah and Sarawak;
- Review the schemes of service for teachers and introduce additional incentives for serving in the interior;
- Raise the standard of teacher training for all levels of schools and increase the number of trained teachers according to demand;
- Increase advanced training opportunities for teachers and lecturers so that they are always current in their respective knowledge and skills;

- Strengthen the position of Malay language as *lingua franca* among the people;
- Encourage and develop the Malay language as a dynamic literary and cultural language, which is accepted and used by all communities in Malaysia;
- Recognise the right to study the mother tongue like Chinese, Tamil, Iban, Kadazandusun and others in schools, and improve the implementation of policies on mother tongue education, so that it is more efficient and responsive to the demands of parents. Trained mother tongue language teachers must be supplied by government schools when at least ten students need such teachers, and the training of mother tongue teachers must be improved at teacher training colleges and public institutions of higher learning;
- Retain the various language streams in primary schools while encouraging greater integration among students of different ethnic groups, for example through co-curriculum activities;
- Increase the number of mother tongue schools and upgrade their facilities according to need and demand;
- Improve the teaching and learning of international languages, especially English and Arabic languages;
- Improve the quality of and facilities in primary and secondary religious schools;
- Strengthen the position of the existing public institutions of higher learning and improve their performance;
- Systematically increase the number of public institutions of higher learning without weakening the existing ones, so that more qualified students have access to higher education at minimum fees or for free;
- Guarantee the autonomy and standards of universities and other institutions of higher learning by establishing a Universities Commission as an independent supervisory body, and amend the University and University Colleges Act to ensure the fundamental rights of the academic community, including students;

- Provide an educational television channel to complement formal education and to encourage life-long continuing education, with the help of the private corporate sector as well as public and private educational institutions;
- Widen the scope of the National Accreditation Authority to monitor, investigate and propose recognition of certificates, diplomas and degrees outside the national education system. Degrees from institutions of higher learning in Arabia, Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, China and other countries, and local educational certificates such as the United Independent Schools Examination (UISE) will be considered based upon academic standards.

(2) Health

The Barisan Nasional government has a program to corporatise the public health system as a step towards privatisation. This program was implemented without due consultation with all affected parties, including the staff of the health system and the people.

Malaysia's public health system is among the best and cheapest in the world, achieved at a low budget allocation. There is no reason why this system should be privatised now although we will explore and study various options for financing the health programme, including the possible establishment of a National Health Insurance scheme.

We will carry out consultations with all stakeholders on the ways to improve the quality of the health service. We pledge to defend and improve the quality of service.

Accordingly we shall:

- Establish a National Health Council, with the objective of protecting the interests of the people and advancing the quality of health;
- Abolish all programmes to privatise the public health system;
- Review the cost and quality of service of all the health support services that have been privatised;
- Increase expenditure allocations for the health sector;
- Restructure the scheme of service for government medical staff to be more commensurate with their work load and responsibility;

- Maintain low cost healthcare services for all the people;
- Establish a commission to study the deficiencies in the existing health system and to make recommendations for improving the public health system;
- Monitor private medical services and check any abuses;
- Establish a national centre for disease control;
- Increase continuing educational and specialist training opportunities for doctors, nurses and laboratory staff;
- Review the possibility of incorporating complementary healthcare methods such as homeopathy and traditional medicine within the Malaysian health system;
- Step up health promotion activities, health education, preventive measures and monitoring of diseases;
- Encourage the greater involvement of women in the health sector, including training more women doctors to handle female patients.

(3) Housing

Comfortable housing at a reasonable price is a basic need. With increasing urbanization, this need has become more pressing.

The BN government programmes to develop low and medium cost housing have been a failure. As a result of their confused policies and excessive land speculation, supply exceeds demand for houses whose prices are beyond the reach of lower and middle income groups, while there is insufficiency of low and medium cost housing. Large numbers have spent years on the waiting list; one of the consequences is the phenomenon of the urban pioneers (or squatters).

The Alternative Front pledges to establish a People's Housing Corporation with the objective of meeting demands for low and medium cost housing. Construction can be corporatised with the government providing allocations for housing. Indirectly, this programme can help reduce the price of houses.

Until the housing problem is solved, the rights of urban pioneers (squatters) must be recognised. They have the right

to alternative housing or other reasonable compensation if they are required to make way for development.

We also pledge to undertake the following:

- Increase the number of good and comfortable low cost houses which meet household space and environmental needs;
- Overcome the “squatter” problem as quickly as possible, preferably through development of housing in situ and/or land sharing;
- Mandate a system of consultations between the “squatters”, developers and the authorities to reach settlement on matters of alternative housing or land or other compensation;
- Provide public facilities around flats to ensure a balanced and healthy personality development;
- Carry out efforts to provide easy and cheap credit facilities to help “squatters” to buy and own their houses.

(4) Social Services

We shall focus on the social needs of the people, especially the less fortunate. This will be done with the help and cooperation of social and community organisations. We shall strengthen our relations with these organisations and encourage them to take a bigger role assisted by the federal, state and local governments.

- Carry out the responsibility of the government to provide comprehensive social services that are fair and efficient;
- Ensure that every housing project above a particular size provide social facilities, such as playing fields, public recreational clubs, libraries and so forth, for the use of the general public;
- Provide a systematic and comprehensive arrangement to protect and provide assistance to the poor, orphans and single parents;
- Ensure equal opportunities for the disabled to achieve self-improvement, education, careers, social participation and the provision of the necessary facilities to enable them to be independent in all public areas, facilities and buildings.

(5) Environment

The BN government only talks about environment and sustainable development. But they do not have any programme for sustainable development of any aspect of environment (whether forest, fishery, water or air). In fact they are unable to mobilise the people to protect their environment. Most environmental indicators show a decline in the quality of the environment, although the government tried to hide the air pollution level when the haze worsened recently. When anything undesirable happens, such as a land slide, government leaders are quick to blame the people, neighbouring countries, and in fact, God!

The earth is God's gift to human beings. In principle, development should not destroy the environment, and any negative impact of development on the environment must be minimised through a system of development management that is comprehensive, firm and with a long term vision.

Therefore, we promise to:

- Formulate a long term sustainable development policy involving all strata of society, to promote full support from all levels of government, non-governmental organisations, political parties and the public at large;
- Amend the Environmental Protection Act so that no project can be started without the approval of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and the written commitment of the project proponents to implement all provisions for mitigation, as determined by the Department of Environment, with clear procedures for providing information and for consultations in the Environmental Impact Assessment process involving the main stakeholders;
- Coordinate the environmental protection laws at the state and federal levels so that enforcement and supervision can be more efficient and cost-effective;
- Implement laws relating to the protection of the national heritage, and increase fines for breaching the Environmental Protection Act and laws to protect our natural heritage;
- Ensure that every state gazettes a reasonable number of national parks, conservation parks, sites for new urban centres and housing development areas in its master plan;
- Work towards the standardisation of laws relating to forestry and logging among the various states and establish an independent inspection system to ensure

that all these laws are firmly implemented;

- Encourage all the states to immediately gazette sufficient water catchment areas to meet the needs of the future;
- Consult with the state governments so that they implement the existing conservation plans and provide new conservation plans wherever necessary.

(6) Consumerism and Prices

- Strengthen consumer protection laws, especially those relating to price control, cost of services and their quality, particularly during festive seasons;
- Review the Consumer Act so that an independent Tribunal can be established, with participation from non-governmental organisations, to identify the list of necessary products and control price increases by establishing a price index for the purpose;
- Encourage the cooperative movement for production and distribution of necessary goods;
- Encourage consumer organisations to be more active in raising the awareness of consumers regarding their own rights;
- Regulate advertisements so that they will not degrade the dignity of women or other groups.

(7) Workers

In order that Malaysia can be more competitive in the global economy of the new millennium, workers must be more flexible in their expertise and capacities, as well as innovative with ever increasing productivity. To achieve this, the process of continuing education, improvement of the work environment and the framework of industrial relations are important, from the point of view of workers' rights, employer interests and national interests.

We promise to:

- Form a framework of tripartite consultation that is effective, just and democratic, and amend laws relating to labour, trade unions and industrial relations consistent with it;
- Repeal or amend laws which restrict the right of workers to form, participate and be active in trade unions;

- Review and update retrenchment benefits and study the establishment of a national retrenchment fund to help retrenched workers;
- Fix a reasonable minimum monthly wage for daily paid workers;
- Fix a reasonable monthly wage for estate workers and seriously implement a housing scheme for estate workers;
- Provide an example for a five day work week with normal working period of not more than 40 hours a week;
- Review methods of recruitment and pay for foreign workers and reduce dependency on them;
- Recognise the right of trade unions and union leaders to participate in national politics;
- Increase the retirement age to 60 years for the public sector, consistent with the improvement of health and life span;
- Ensure equal pay and benefits for men and women doing equal work or performing similar duties;
- Increase maternity leave in the public sector to 90 days and introduce leave of 7 days for the husband;
- Develop programmes with the private sector for continuing education and training in order to improve flexibility, expertise and productivity of workers;
- Introduce retraining programmes for retrenched workers;
- Review the effectiveness of the National Institute for Work Safety and Health and overcome its deficiencies.

(8) Women

The BN government regards women as a marginal source of labour; they encourage women to work outside the home when there is shortage of labour and to return to their homes when unemployment increases.

We shall:

- Enforce strictly laws regarding the rights, interests and dignity of women and abolish laws and

regulations that discriminate against women;

- Protect the rights and welfare of women who have been abandoned by their husbands without any reasonable support;
- Continue payments of pensions for widows even after they remarry;
- Provide creches within the community and also at places of work;
- Introduce flexible working hours for working women;
- Study the Women's Agenda for Change in order to implement appropriate recommendations therein.

(9) Youth

The failure or lack of effectiveness of several programmes for youths is because they are often arranged without sufficient consultation with the youths themselves. We will provide new impetus to the youth programmes through meaningful consultation with the youths themselves. We shall undertake the following:

- Give encouragement and facilities to youths in order to improve their talents in the fields of arts, sports and culture;
- Provide projects aimed especially at discovering leadership talent in individual, cultural, entrepreneurial and social development;
- Overcome problems, such as unemployment, drug abuse, drop-out and moral questions, faced by some youths with innovative methods;
- Provide greater opportunities for youths of different social backgrounds to participate in skills training and in economic projects;
- Provide more effective rehabilitation centres and work opportunities for youths that have become victims of social problems, so that they can be absorbed back into the community.

(10)The elderly and pensioners

The elderly and pensioners ought to have appropriate roles in a fast changing society. Since they are often not too busy with the burden of work, the elderly should be encouraged

to play a bigger role in society. Local governments should start programmes to mobilise the elderly towards this end.

In order to safeguard the welfare of the elderly and the pensioners we shall:

- Fix a minimum pension level that will enable pensioners to sustain themselves;
- Encourage pensioners who are still able to work to contribute towards national development;
- Have a half fare system for the elderly and pensioners for all types of public transport;
- Make it obligatory for children or close relatives to look after the aged and support such moves by tax exemptions or some other incentives;
- Ensure that the elderly are given priority to go on the pilgrimage;
- Encourage non-governmental organisations to develop programmes and courses for the elderly and pensioners to improve their talents, develop new skills, participate in study tours; language courses, physical education and so forth.

D. National Unity

National unity still constitutes a major challenge to Malaysia. The Alternative Front will focus attention on efforts to strengthen unity among the various ethnic groups:

- Abolish the practice of “divide and rule” which has been practised by the BN government in order to stay in power;
- Establish national unity on the basis of justice and cultural diversity;
- Uphold the Malay special privileges provision in the Constitution while opposing abuses, and extending affirmative action to weak and backward groups irrespective of race, social background and religion;
- Pay special attention to the Orang Asli in the Peninsula and all the indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak, and amend various laws and regulations pertaining to them so that justice is served, including establishing a Commission to protect Native Customary Rights (NCR) land and to resolve

disputes relating to such lands while respecting their traditions and customs;

- Strengthen federal-state relations and develop a just and democratic solution to matters relating to financial allocations, utilisation of natural resources and administration of land. The petroleum agreement between state and federal governments will be reviewed;
- Strengthen national integration by restoring the rights and privileges that were promised to the people of Sabah and Sarawak, while checking the abuse of these privileges by a small group of BN leaders and their cronies;
- Establish an independent Ethnic Relations Council, reporting directly to Parliament to help in building a united Bangsa Malaysia.

(1) Religion and Culture

Our objective of a just society is founded, among other things, on religion and culture. We need to ensure that our perspectives and approaches to questions of religion and culture help us achieve such an objective. Therefore, we shall:

- Establish a Commission for Shari'ah Law at the Federal level;
- Reduce the influence of party politics in the respective State Religious Councils, mosques and other religious institutions;
- Allocate land for graves and places of worship for non-Muslims on the principle of freedom of religion;
- Increase inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogues to strengthen mutual understanding among the people;
- Develop a Malaysian culture based on moral values and ideals. This requires an open attitude towards the diversity of cultures of the various ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in the country, taking account of the country's history and evolution. Healthy cultural elements from outside will be accepted, subject to our own social and ethical values.

E. Build Genuine Democracy

Genuine democracy provides meaningful space for the

people to express their views and to participate in various processes of daily administration and not merely to voting once in five years.

All interest groups will be allowed to present and debate their views if they do not threaten national security, incite violence, or spread false accusations.

Information will be free available subject to strictly defined restrictions.

We will abolish all forms of government repression and threat. All anti-democratic laws, like detention without trial, will be abrogated.

Nevertheless we will introduce some minimum regulations, with heavy penalties if violated. Democracy does not mean, “anything goes”; it requires responsible people to restrain themselves within the confines of these minimum regulations.

We shall do the following:

- Abrogate the Internal Security Act and detention without trial;
- Form an Independent Commission to review all acts and laws (such as the Official Secrets Act, Sedition Act, Police Act, University and University Colleges Act, Printing Presses and Publications Act, etc.), with the objective of repealing whatever violates basic human rights;
- Guarantee the freedom of the press and the rights of peaceful assembly, expression and organisation, by amending the appropriate acts and laws; RTM will be corporatised and subject to an independent Broadcasting Commission;
- **All policies, acts and laws will be reviewed and modified to uphold the dignity of human beings;**
- Ensure that the Human Rights Commission is independent and has representation from all major groups;
- Formulate a Freedom of Information Act to guarantee transparency and free flow of information from the government to the people;
- Enact a law to protect “whistle-blowers” of official misconduct and corruption;

- Sign and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of human rights education at all levels of education and institutions of higher learning as well as training centres for public servants;
- Improve prison administration and conditions in line with international standards.

F. Rehabilitate Our International Image and Status

Malaysia's name has been tarnished by the BN government lately due to the many scandals as well as irresponsible statements by some leaders, plus also because of the double standards that they practice inside the country and overseas. Still, Malaysia continues to have an important role in the international arena, and we will defend successes in our foreign policy.

We shall continue to:

- Emphasise the international positions of Malaysia which uphold justice and defend the interests of the developing countries, and amend policies which are contrary to these positions;
- Promote the views and interests of the developing world in international forums, and try to revive the non-aligned movement and to give new strength to the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC);
- Struggle for the reform of various international organisations so that they become more democratic and transparent, and do not act merely as instruments of any super power;
- Prepare the country to handle globalisation with the principle of "accept the good and reject the bad";
- Establish friendly relations with all countries desiring peace and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Therefore, we shall:

- Uphold a new international system, based on equality and national sovereignty, mutual respect and human rights;

- Implement foreign policy that is independent and neutral, and ensure that Malaysia's economic and political interests will never be subjected to the interests of any global super power;
- Fight for reform of the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organisation (WTO) towards greater justice for small and poor countries and the people of the world, so that they do not serve the interests of huge multinational companies or the super powers;
- Ensure that the process of globalisation will not threaten the interests of the country and people;
- Oppose concentration of wealth and exploitation at the international level, which results in increased inequality between the North and South;
- Support the policy of constructive engagement among the ASEAN states on matters pertaining to the economy, environment, basic human rights, foreign workers and other social problems;
- Step up regional cooperation among all the member states of ASEAN in all spheres;
- Extend relations in ASEAN to the people so that they are not confined only to inter-governmental relations;
- Ensure that no Malaysian territory will be offered as a foreign military base, contrary to what Mahathir has done, although he is supposed to be anti-West.

3. The Future of the Country is in the Hands of the people

The BN government once claimed itself to be “clean, efficient and trustworthy”, but now it is in fact “wasteful, corrupt and arrogant”.

To save Malaysia from the stranglehold of greedy leaders who aggrandise political and economic power, the people must unite to reject the BN government under the leadership of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Lacking resources, denied access and slandered in the mainstream media, it will certainly be difficult for the Alternative Front to defeat the BN government. The BN government piles advantage upon advantage by abusing its

control of the government machinery and expenditure, the print and electronic media, and money politics.

Nevertheless, the BN's corruption and abuse of power has opened a path never before trodden by the people of Malaysia. For the first time since Independence , the majority of people from all ethnic groups desire change, and the alternative political parties have succeeded in uniting for justice. With the increasing awareness of the people and the growing strength of unity among the alternative parties, it should at least be possible to reduce BN domination in the coming twelfth general elections, and by the grace of God, facilitate the replacement of the Barisan Nasional, for too long the traitor to the people, with the Barisan Alternatif.



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