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SERVICE**

**COUNTRY PAPER
ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY : MALAYSIA
PUBLIC SERVICE POLICY**

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	MALAYSIA SUCCESS STORY	4
3	VISION 2020	7
4	CIVIL SOCIETY IN MALAYSIA	9
ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY : FORMULATING MALAYSIA PUBLIC POLICY		
5	• ECONOMIC	13
6	• SOCIAL	19
7	• PUBLIC SERVICE	23
8	CHALLENGES	26
9	CONCLUSION	29

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY : FORMULATING MALAYSIA PUBLIC POLICY

The role of civil society in assisting the government to develop national agenda or public policy turns out greater impact rather than without their participation in formulating such agenda and policy.

Malaysian Government in enacting public policies has always welcomed constructive views and suggestions of the respective civil society organization. The opinion of this parties represent at all level of Malaysian multiracial and multicultural society.

In this paper, several views and suggestions of the civil society in assisting the government during planning the national budget, reviewing the education system and formulating public policy are discussed in a nutshell.

Some factors affecting the involvement of civil society in the formulation of public policy and few main factors that prompted the government to be more sensitive and responsive to the views of civil society are listed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has reached a defining moment in its development path. Vision 2020 is not possible without economic, social and government transformation. In Malaysia history, civil society organization has given a great contribution in various field of development namely in economic, social and public sector. In this paper, engagement with civil society in formulating public policies will briefly discussed. Focusing in the cluster of economic, social and public sector, the involvement of civil society in planning national budget, reviewing education system and reviewing public service remuneration policy will be covered in a nutshell.

2. MALAYSIA SUCCESS STORY

2.1 The Malaysian economy has made a gargantuan leap since her independence in 1957. The transformation of the country's economy from one based on primary commodities like tin, rubber and palm oil to a dynamic and vibrant industrializing nation is attributed to a variety of pull factors. Malaysia's political and economic stability, prudent and pragmatic investor friendly business policies, cost-productive workforce, a developed infrastructure comparable to that of any western country and a host of other amenities makes this country an enticing place for investors.

2.2 Multinational corporations from more than 40 countries have invested in over 5,000 companies in Malaysia's manufacturing and related services sectors, encouraged by the country's pro-business environment. Malaysia today is one of the world's top locations for offshore manufacturing and service-based operations. Many of the existing foreign companies have also continued to show their confidence in the country's potentials as an investment location through their numerous expansions and diversifications over the years, particularly in high technology projects.



PAST

PRESENT

2.3 At independence, Malaysia was one of the poorest countries in the world. Though reliable data are hard to come by, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (in purchasing power parity terms) was comparable to that of Honduras, and Egypt, and some 5 % below that of Ghana. Now, Malaysia's income is 7.8 times that of Ghana, more than five times that of Honduras, and more than 2.5 times that of Egypt. In the global growth league tables, Malaysia is in the top tier, along with China, Taiwan, South Korea and Thailand.

2.4 Moreover, the benefits of the growth have been shared. Hard-core poverty is set to be eliminated by 2010, with the overall poverty rate falling to 2.8 percent. Malaysia has succeeded in reducing income divides that separated ethnic groups, not by bringing the top down, but by bringing the bottom up. Part of the country's success in reducing poverty reflects strong job creation. While

unemployment is a problem in most of the world, Malaysia has been importing labour. In the 50 years since independence, 7.24 million jobs have been created, an increase of 261 percent, which would be equivalent to the creation of 105 million jobs in the US.

2.5 There were many reasons not to have expected Malaysia to be a success. As Malaysia was gaining its independence, the Nobel Prize winning economist Gunnar Myrdal wrote an influential book called *Asian Drama*, in which he predicted a bleak future for the region. Malaysia is rich in natural resources. But, with few exceptions, such countries are afflicted with the so-called "natural resource curse" : countries with an abundance of resources not only do not do as well as expected, but actually do worse than countries without such benefits. While natural resource wealth should make it easier to create a more egalitarian society, countries with more resources, on average, are marked by greater inequality.



2.6 Moreover, Malaysia's multiracial, multi-cultural society made it more vulnerable to civil strife, which has occurred in many other resource-rich countries, as one group tried to seize the wealth for itself. In many cases, minorities work hard to garner the fruits of this wealth for themselves, at the expense of the majority. Bolivia, a rich country with poor people, comes to mind.

2.7 At independence, Malaysia also faced a communist insurgency. The 'hearts and minds' of those in the countryside had to be won, and that meant bringing economic benefits and minimizing 'collateral' damage to civilians is an important agenda.

2.8 Economically, Malaysia learned from its neighbours. Too many of the ex-colonies, rejecting their colonial heritage, Malaysia took different course, looking

instead to the highly successful countries of East Asia. It invested in education and technology, pushed a high savings rate, enacted a strong and effective affirmative action program, and adopted sound macroeconomic policies.

2.9 Malaysia also recognized that success required an active role for government. It eschewed ideology, following or rejecting outsiders' advice on a pragmatic basis. Most tellingly, during the financial crisis of 1997, it did not adopt IMF policies and as a result had the shortest and shallowest downturn of any of the afflicted countries. When it re-emerged, it was not burdened with debt and bankrupt firms like so many of its neighbours.

2.10 This success was not only a matter of economics: had Malaysia followed the policies recommended by the IMF, it would have torn apart the social fabric created over the preceding decades. Malaysia's success should be studied both by those looking for economic prosperity and those seeking to understand how people live together, not just with tolerance, but with respect and working together.

2.11 As proud Malaysians, we are happy to play our part in highlighting the economic achievements and developments of the country. From a country whose economy in the 1980s was still largely commodities-based, Malaysia has managed to transform itself into a Newly Industrialized Economy in the 1990s, and now well on its way to become a fully developed nation by 2020.

3. VISION 2020

3.1 Vision 2020 is a Malaysian ideal introduced by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad when tabling the Sixth Malaysia Plan in 1991. The vision calls for the nation to achieve a self-sufficient industrialized nation in the year 2020, encompasses all aspects of life, from economic prosperity, social well-being, world class educational, political stability, as well as psychological balance. In order to achieve Vision 2020, Mahathir lamented that the nation required an annual growth of 7% (in real terms) over the thirty-year periods (1990–2020), so that the economy would be eightfold stronger than its 1990 GDP of RM115 billion. This would translate to a GDP of RM920 billion in 2020.

3.2 In view of changing global conditions amid the Financial Crisis of 2007 – 2010, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had in August 2009, said that there was now a need to redefine and recalibrate the vision in terms of how to achieve it, as well as its timeline. Najib, who said that it was necessary for Malaysia to undertake bold economic reforms, had tasked the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC) to carry out a review of the vision. The NEAC is expected to publish its report by end 2009, with a second report on implementation 6 months after that. Najib also said that in order for Malaysia to achieve a developed nation status by 2020, the country has to grow at an annual rate of 8% over the next 10 years. He cited that a lower hypothetical growth of 6% per annum would delay Malaysia's vision to become a developed country by 10 years to 2030. Malaysia's GDP growth rate averaged 7.2% per annum in the 1990s, and slowed to 5.4% per annum in the following decade.



3.3 The Government Transformation Programme (GTP) is an effort by Malaysia's current Government to address seven key areas concerning the people of the country. The programme was unveiled on 28 January 2010 by the Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and is expected to contribute in making the

country a developed and high-income nation as per its Vision 2020. The Programme was created to support the Prime Minister Najib's motto, People First, Performance Now and will be implemented until 2012 as a foundation for the transformation of Malaysia. 6 initial National Key Results Areas (NKRAs) which were derived from surveys with the nation's citizens and following months of evaluating the people's demands of the Government and the most pressing issues were selected to develop the NKRAs. In July 2011, a 7th NKRA was announced to address another pressing issue of inflation and rising daily cost of the people. A focused list of projects and initiatives for each NKRA was developed to ensure that big fast results for specific targets are achieved.

3.4 The NKRAs are the responsibility of relevant Ministries and the Performance Delivery and Management Unit (PEMANDU) was initiated to monitor the achievements of each Ministry. The NKRAs and its detailed targets were made public with the publishing of the GTP Roadmap. Following the first year in implementation, majority of the NKRAs achieved more than 90% of their targets and the results were also made available via the GTP Annual Report 2010.

4. CIVIL SOCIETY IN MALAYSIA

4.1 These bodies are usually called "non-governmental", the English translation of the non-governmental organization (NGO). However, the term is not accurate. In addition to NGOs, the term "non-profit" or non-profit organization (NPO) is also less accurate. Both terms are less accurate because it does not explain anything directly, but rather to explain the reverse order. It does not explain "what something is", but rather to explain "what is something that is not". The term NGO and NPO does not explain directly what kind of body, but only to say that it is not the government or for-profit. More accurate term is "civil society bodies" or civil society organization (CSO). This is because it is in line with contemporary thinking about the nation. However, this paper does not intend to give a detailed definition or involve in polemics about the meaning of civil society.

4.2 There are two major popular perspective of civil society. First, civil society as a form of society or civilization imaginable, namely as contained in the

meaning of civility. Second, civil society refers to the non-government sector or business. Hence, this paper refers to this second perspective. The term civil society is used in the context of their position and role in today's stateless system. In modern stateless system, there are three main sectors of the move. The first is that the government sector, followed by the business sector or the private sector and thirdly, civil society or other terms such as "people", "social enterprise" and so on.

4.3 Civil society is that the people who do not belong to the position and role in government or business. Each class in civil society has its own movement, represented by the respective bodies. Some are very structured to have a national body. For example, youth represented by the Malaysian Youth Council (MBM), women represented by the National Council of Women's Organizations Malaysia (NCWO) and professionals represented by the Center for Professional Malaysia (BIM). There are some important issues that relate civil society and development. Course requires the development of civil society. But, at the same time, development efforts also need to play the role of civil society. In fact, civil society is capable of becoming "development partners" effectively. But, civil society, especially youth, often only seen as "the benefits of development" only. Civil society, especially the youth, are very rarely given the opportunity to be involved as a development partner, especially in decision-making structures and processes.

4.4 In today's stateless system, there is no government that can provide all. Similarly, there is no business that can provide all. However familiar and even co-operation between government and business, they were the only two still cannot provide all. Meanwhile, civil society does not intend to replace the functions and role of government and business.

4.5 The bottom line for the government is to vote. While the bottom line for business is profit. But, there are too many things in life that has nothing to do with votes and profit. This is the relevance of civil society. That is why the historical fact that the various types and forms of CSO has always been rooted, blooming and fresh at all times. Generally, the CSO has six objectives that are generic in nature that is shared. The objective is:

- First : To help organize the situation and circumstances, through its policies and programs, which bring positive effects;
- Second : To help establish the situation and circumstances, through its policies and programs, which prevent and repair the negative effects;
- Third : To help during disasters and emergencies;
- Fourth : The fight for the fate of the partnership and the socio-economic profitability fair;
- Fifth : Human rights; and
- Sixth : Preparing future leaders.

4.6 In Malaysia history, the CSO has given great contribution in various fields of development. Among them is the assistance provided during emergencies and disasters, such as extended to flood victims in southern region recently. They also strive to improve the quality of education and training through group learning, coaching classes, private schools, kindergartens and child skills and leadership training, and conduct awareness efforts and community education in various areas such as youth development, the environment, consumerism and fight against drugs, smoking and HIV / AIDS.

4.7 CSO also organize religious education programs, sports activities and hang out, raise awareness of issues of poverty, corruption and social injustice, and seek to influence the decision about freedom of expression, and holiday pay. In the international scene, the CSO move humanitarian aid such as in Palestine, Southern Thailand, Southern Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, Iraq, Aceh and Sri Lanka.

4.8 In this context, either through the programs listed above, or through advocacy done through the memorandum, representation and so forth, the CSO has managed to convince a number of government decisions that ended with policy, program or institution specifically about a certain subject or issue.

4.9 Among the policies, programs and institutions referred to is the National Youth Development Policy, National Women's Policy, National Consumer Policy, scholarships and financial aid for Malays, International Islamic University Malaysia and Bank Islam, and ministries that are responsible for youth, women, consumers and environment.

4.10 Based on this experience, it is imperative that CSO is recognized as development partners, particularly in the decision-making process. Mobilization of the strength of civil society and the business sector led jointly by the government promises a great synergy.

4.11 If we examine the current atmosphere closely, the emergence of civil society movement in Malaysia is coincided with the increasing of middle class groups with accessibility in its demand for greater political participation and transparency.

4.12 The global spread of democracy has also opened up new opportunities for the Malaysian civil society groups to participate in establishing rights, institutions and mechanism of accountability in a society where citizen participation not very long ago was curbed and discouraged. For many people, the civil society has even become a slogan that represents an alternative center for political advancement.

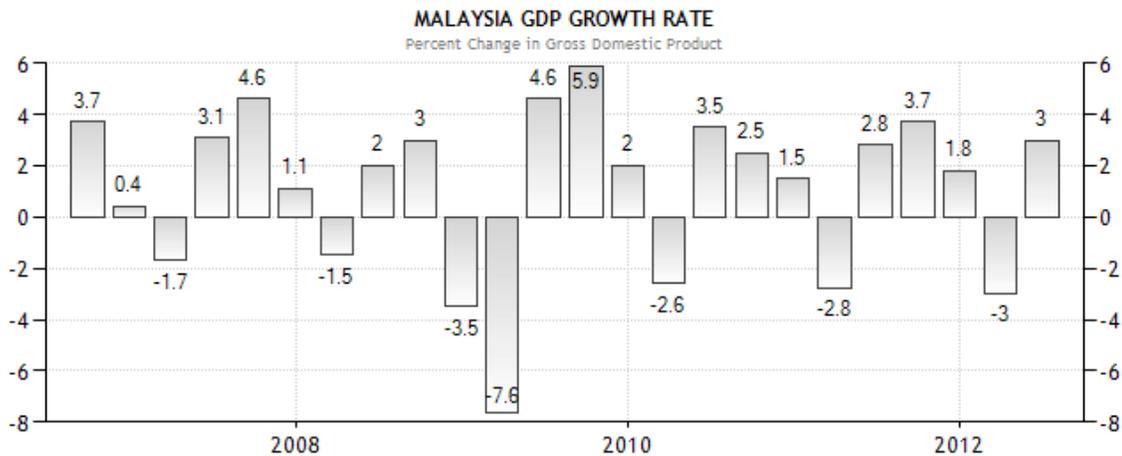
4.13 While the civil society was hoped for contributing to democracy and good governance, it actually had to re-evaluate its strategies and adjust itself as well, quite fundamentally and dramatically, in order to face up to the challenges and opportunities of a new situation. The uncertainty in the position and strategies of civil society in Malaysia is associated by the intensifying call for accountability.

4.14 Right at the moment when there is ambiguity among the civil actors about what they are actually able to achieve and how to achieve it, both the internal governance of civil society groups as well as their external performance in the public domain is becoming subject of greater scrutiny.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY : FORMULATING MALAYSIA PUBLIC POLICY

5. ECONOMIC

5.1 The GDP in Malaysia expanded 3.00 percent in the second quarter of 2012 over the previous quarter. Historically, from 2000 until 2012, Malaysia GDP Growth Rate averaged 1.22 Percent reaching an all time high of 5.90 Percent in September of 2009 and a record low of -7.60 Percent in March of 2009. The GDP growth rate provides an aggregated measure of changes in value of the goods and services produced by an economy. Malaysia is a rapidly developing economy in Asia. Malaysia, a middle-income country, has transformed itself since the 1970s from a producer of raw materials into an emerging multi-sector economy. The Government of Malaysia is continuing efforts to boost domestic demand to wean the economy off of its dependence on exports. Nevertheless, exports - particularly of electronics - remain a significant driver of the economy. This page includes a chart with historical data for Malaysia GDP Growth Rate.



SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS MALAYSIA

5.2 GDP in Malaysia was worth 278.67 billion US dollars in 2011, according to a report published by the World Bank. The GDP value of Malaysia is roughly equivalent to 0.45 percent of the world economy. Historically, from 1960 until 2011, Malaysia GDP averaged 59.93 Billion USD reaching an all time high of 278.67 Billion USD in December of 2011 and a record low of 2.42 Billion USD in December of 1961. The gross domestic product (GDP) measures of national

income and output for a given country's economy. The gross domestic product (GDP) is equal to the total expenditures for all final goods and services produced within the country in a stipulated period of time. This page includes a chart with historical data for Malaysia GDP.



5.3 One of the factors that helps in increasing economic growth in Malaysia is a good budget and proper mould of economic model. In order for the government planning the annual budget, involvement from various parties would be taken into consideration. Views from interested parties such as civil society organization and non government organization also often be taken seriously by the government. Views of these groups bring a 'voice' from all groups and people in Malaysia. Starting from fourth quarter of the year 2011, Ministry of Finance (MOF) had started their planning in formulating budget for 2013. MOF received 84 memoranda from various groups, NGOs and individuals on proposals for the Malaysia Budget 2013. They start with the first 18 focus group meetings. Among the popular requests was for lower individual and corporate tax. The Malaysia Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak who is also the Finance Minister has invited Malaysians to participate in the Malaysia Budget 2013 discussions by contributing ideas and sharing their suggestions and views online from July 16 to July 29, 2012. The public can submit their opinions by clicking on the appropriate place on the latest posting on Najib's blog, www.1malaysia.com.my.

5.4 From the feedback given, lower taxes, more affordable homes, cheaper food and better public transport are among the items on the wish list from

Malaysians for Budget 2013. There were also requests for the Government to manage social problems caused by foreign workers. Listed below are some recommendations from several CSOs for the government to take into consideration in planning for national budget:

- The Federation of Malaysian Consumers' Association (FOMCA), Chief Executive Officer Datuk Paul Selvaraj, highlighted five major issues in its memorandum. They were related to food prices, the public transport system, healthcare, trade competition and crime in urban areas. To combat rising food prices, the Government needs to invest more in the agricultural sector. This will make us more self-sustainable and less dependent on imported foods. The consumer body also wanted better public transport subsidies, adding that it had proposed a subsidy scheme for public transport companies, based on schemes adopted by other countries. The Government should act as a regulator instead of getting involved directly. On healthcare, FOMCA proposed that the current system be maintained as it was working well. FOMCA hope the Government enforces the Competition Act 2012 to liberalize the market, so that prices will drop and consumers will benefit from trade competition. The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements and the abuse of dominant positions in the market. Crime was a key issue the Government needed to address, especially in the urban areas.
- The Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (CUEPACS) President Datuk Omar Osman said the umbrella body for civil sector unions has issued a six point wish list to the Government to consider in the Budget announcement for 1.4 million civil servants. We will be satisfied if at least 70% of the demands are met. The six demands were announcement of the new scheme to replace the New Civil Servants Remuneration Scheme which was scrapped earlier this year, affordable urban housing, increase in rent allowance, additional bonus apart from the recent half-month bonus, the fate of 45,000 contract workers whose contracts ends this Dec 31 and reinstatement of the federal-level Joint Departmental Council which was abolished in May this year.
- Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) Executive Director Shamsuddin Bardan conveys its primary concern was on the country's tax structure.

Corporate tax in Malaysia, at its current rate of 25%, is still very high when compared with other countries in the region. MEF are seeking a gradual reduction to at least 20% comparing it with Singapore's corporate tax rate of 17%. On individual tax, tax exemptions should not be capped at RM6,000.00 but based on the actual amount instead because this would encourage Malaysians to increase their EPF contributions. Companies which hire retirees or retain employees beyond the retirement age should also be rewarded with tax benefits. People should be encouraged to work for as long as they can as this will reduce our dependence on foreign workers. Employed senior citizens should also be given a tax break.

BUDGET 2013: FACTS AND FIGURES

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> RM38.7bil to improve quality of education with an additional RM500mil to train teachers in the core subjects of English, Bahasa Malaysia, Science and Maths
- > Minimum pension to be increased to RM820 from RM720 for those who had served government for at least 25 years


- > One and a half month's bonus for civil servants
- > BR1M aid of RM500 to be continued. Scheme extended to include a payment of RM250 for singles making less than RM2000 a month
- 

> Allocation of RM591 million in 2013 to further reduce the crime rate
- > RM1.9 billion to build 123,000 affordable houses in strategic locations

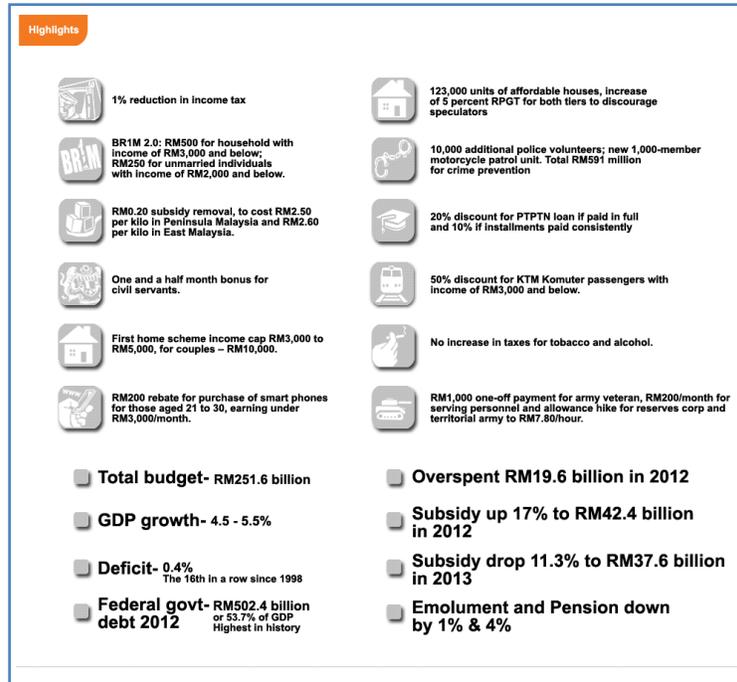

- > Subsidy on sugar to be cut by RM0.20 per kg effective from Sept 29, 2012 in view of rising number of people suffering from diabetes
- 

> Individual income tax rate to be reduced by 1 percentage point for chargeable income up to RM50,000
- > One-off rebate of RM200 for those aged between 21 and 30 with a monthly income of below RM3,000 for the purchase of 3G smartphones


- 

> 50% discount on KTM Komuter fares extended to all Malaysians with a monthly income of RM3,000 and below

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5.5 After Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak tabled the 2013 Budget, which amounts to RM251.6 billion, several NGO leaders and associations shared their views on the matter as follows:

- Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (FOMCA) : Overall, the budget is good as it addresses several pertinent issues such as transportation and healthcare. But more needs to be done to improve connectivity of transport system between rural and urban areas. As for healthcare, it's good the government is increasing the number of 1Malaysia clinics in the country. However, we must also look into having more hospitals and doctors in the so that people can have better healthcare system.
- Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) : It is quite a good budget that does not only concentrate on foreign investment but also on the domestic economy. It also focuses on the development of human capital and the welfare of the citizen. It covers all levels of the people and it is a fair budget. The global economy is not stable, so more is needed domestically. If we can generate better income, we can reduce the nation's deficit.

- Consumer Association of Penang (CAP) : Welcoming the reduction in sugar subsidy and the resulting rise in the price of sugar. For the sake of consumers health it would be better if the subsidy is withdrawn totally. As for the Real Properties Government Tax (RGPT), a tax of 15 % for the first two years is not high enough as banking loans are still cheap. RPGT of 70% for the first two years will be more effective in curbing speculation and bringing down house prices to a more affordable level. Housing for Malaysians should be given priority as such foreigners should not be allowed to buy landed properties (as in the practice in certain countries). As for non-landed properties, foreigners should not be made eligible for local housing loans unless he is a permanent resident.
- CUEPACS : It is pleased that the government has agreed to pay 1.5 months bonus for civil servants, meeting one if its six demands in its wish list. Datuk Seri Najib announced the bonus for the 1.4 million civil servants. It hopes that the bonus will reduce the burden on civil servants, especially families at the beginning of school year. The bonus was a good move in reducing the people's year-end financial burden. Although the government didn't quite meet CUEPACS demand for cheap urban housing, nevertheless this was the first phase in a long-term initiative.
- National Union for Teaching Profession (NUTP) : Budget 2013 would ensure no children are left behind by allowing better access to pre-schools. The formation of the Education Development Unit (EDU) is also welcomed as it would allow us to monitor what goes wrong and what goes right.

6. SOCIAL

6.1 The Ministry of Education is undertaking a major review of Malaysia education system. This is perhaps the most important work to be carried out by the government today because its repercussions will be felt for decades to come. It was time for a review of the system as the current policies were based on the 1956 Razak Report. The government is inviting all strata of society to express their views and feelings through the National Dialogue on National Education 2012 to elevate the national education system. The National Education dialogue is officially launched on April 29, 2012 to gather feedback on reviewing the education system. The feedback received is used in education blueprint for the next 10 to 20 years. Besides the dialogue session, the people could also channel their views via the twitter, facebook and the website for all fields of study beginning April 2012 mid July 2012. The series of dialogue is a historical initiative because for the first time, the government is inviting views from the general public on a large scale to participate together in drawing up the development plan for national education as we enter into the new phase of transformation. A preliminary report would be prepared after the completion of the study and members of the public were again invited to give their views before the National Education Blueprint was finalized. However, the series of dialogues was not an avenue for making excessive demands which contradicted the fundamentals enshrined in the constitution, law and Rukun Negara (National Principles). The process is also not to identify or point the fingers at who is right or wrong but all views and recommendations will be taken into account.

6.2 Transforming the education system will not be easy and likely to encounter a number of challenges along the way. But despite this, rest assured that not only are the Government and Ministry of Education committed to delivering on these goals. From individual parents to members of the local community to the private sector, they have a role to play and a personal stake in improving national education system.

6.3 The series of dialogues aimed to enhance the quality of all schools including the national schools, Chinese/Tamil National Type Schools, mission schools and government-aided religious schools. The government had stipulated nine major fields of review namely: elevating the teaching profession; raising the quality of school leadership; raising the quality of schools which was an important

element in the efforts to raise the quality of teaching and learning; strengthening the quality and assessment for preparing human capital for the 21st century. Subsequently, to enhance the command of the various languages among students; the involvement of parents, the private sector and the community as partners in education; raising the preparedness of students to grab opportunities in higher education and the labour market; improving the efficiency and effectiveness of resource management and to develop the capacity and capability of the education delivery system.

6.4 The Education Ministry took into account proposals from 153 letters and memorandums from various non-governmental organizations, associations, institutions, educationists and the public in drawing up the development plan for the national education blueprint. The recommendations were submitted during the three-month-long National Dialogue on Education sessions. Most of the recommendations provided by the stakeholders will be included in the blueprint. The dialogue sessions, held in several locations throughout the country, were facilitated by education review panel members headed by former Education Director-General Tan Sri Dr Wan Zahid Mohd Noordin. The first leg of the dialogue series, known as the Townhall Series, was held in Putrajaya on April 28, 2012 immediately after the inaugural speech and the last one on July 14, 2012 at KSL Resort, JB and in between that, the series covered all the states in West and East Malaysia. A total of 16 series were held and the series recorded an attendance of more than 10,000 people with more than 2500 responses received.

6.5 A majority of the proposals submitted were from NGOs and associations such as the Federation of Malaysian National Writers Associations (Gapena), Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Abim), Dong Zong, Parent Action Group for Education (PAGE), Tamil Foundation Malaysia, parent-teacher associations and the Christian Schools Council. Teachers, former headmasters, Majlis Guru Cemerlang Malaysia and the Pitas district education office in Sabah submitted 20% of the suggestions, with another 20% from individuals. The rest came from institutions such as the Sultan Idris University of Education (UPSI) and the Institute of Strategic Analysis and Policy Research (INSAP).

6.6 Apart from the review and dialogue sessions, the views of foreign experts in the field of education, from Canada, Singapore and South Korea would be considered.

6.7 The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2012-2025 Preliminary Report is opened for public scrutiny starting October 2012. The Ministry would invite stakeholders to give their views and seek feedback before the blueprint is presents to the cabinet and finalized in December. The key phrase in the report is to upgrade the quality of education. If the proposals submitted can help improve the quality of education, ministry ready to accept and incorporate them in the report. The ministry would hold a series of briefings for all to enlighten them on the contents of the plan and priority areas. Information materials will be printed in simple language to enable public to understand the contents of the report. Ministry would also create the Education Delivery Unit to address implementation issues, manage communications with stakeholders and gather feedback on an ongoing basis. As a follow-up, a monitoring committee will be set up made of representatives of ministries, parents and educationist to provide input and insight from time to time on what should be done and which areas needed to be given more emphasis. All recommendations would be given more emphasis and would be appraised based on educational philosophy and whatever implemented should be practical and reasonable and not deviate from the objective of achieving quality education. The public were asked to read the preliminary report before making any conclusion.

6.8 With the launching of the National Education Blueprint (2013-2025) on September 12, 2012, NUTP is finally breathing a sigh of relief as the Government is finally acknowledging the problems faced within the education system. NUTP is in hopes that the education system improve from what it was before. The Blueprint outlined 11 shifts required in transforming the national education system to be at par with other developed nations. This transformation would be carried out in three “waves” over the next 13 years. The time frame set for the transformation may seem long for many. However the time is short for a proper improvement of the country’s education system. The three waves have been divided into Wave 1 (2012-2015) which focuses on efforts to turn around the system by supporting teachers and focusing on core skills, Wave 2 (2016-2020) will see the accelerating system improvement and Wave 3 (2021-2025) will move towards excellence with an increased operational flexibility. The Blueprint

focuses on the six student attributes which is Knowledge, Thinking Skills, Leadership, Bilingual Proficiency, Ethics and National Identity. The Government is now taking a more serious approach in transforming the teaching profession. They are now encouraging more students to choose teaching as their profession. The Shift also stated that only the top 30% of graduates will be recruited for teaching.

6.9 Another shift included in the Blueprint also states that the Government should ensure that every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia (Malaysia Language) and English language. Under this Shift, 70,000 English teachers are to sit for Cambridge Placement Test and be given training to improve language proficiency. This is in order to provide the best education for every child.

12 - New Straits Times- Thursday, 13.9.2012

INFOGRAPHIC: NST

Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025

SHIFT 1
Provide equal access to quality education

- Benchmarking languages, Mathematics and Science to international standards
- Launch revised curriculum in 2017
- Revamp examinations and assessments to focus on thinking skills by 2016
- Raise quality and environment in preschools by 2020
- Shift between 6 and 11 years compulsory schooling
- Physical and teaching resources increased for students with specific needs

SHIFT 6
Empower state, district education offices and schools

- School improvement accelerated nationwide by 2014
- Schoolbased autonomy kicks off with the best performing schools
- 100 per cent basic infrastructure ensured, starting with Sabah and Sarawak

SHIFT 2
Language mastery

- Common BM curriculum at primary level, additional remedial classes before removal of remove classes
- LINUS programme to include English language literary components
- Upskilling of English language staff
- Encourage multilingualism by 2025

SHIFT 7
ICT usage maximised

- Internet exposure widened through 1BestariNet by 2013
- Augment online content by initiating video library
- ICT usage maximised for distance and self-paced learning

SHIFT 3
Foster values-driven Malaysians

- Community service a pre-requisite to graduation by 2017
- Islamic and Moral Education revised with greater focus on core values by 2017
- Participation in 1 Sport, 1 Club and 1 Uniformed Body reinforced
- Students' Integration Plan for Unity (RIMUP) to facilitate interaction across school types, ethnicities and socioeconomic groups

SHIFT 8
Transform ministry delivery

- Provide greater decision-making powers to state and education offices
- Additional 2,500 personnel from ministry and state offices transferred to district offices by 2014
- Strengthen leadership in 150-200 roles from 2013
- Ministry to strengthen key central functions and structure from 2016

SHIFT 4
Give teaching profession a make-over

- Entry bar for teachers raised to be amongst top 30 per cent of graduates
- Quality of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers to be emphasised
- Reducing administrative tasks for teachers by 2013
- Competency and performance-based career progression by 2016
- Lead teachers into becoming subject specialists by 2016
- Peer-led culture of excellence and certification process by 2025

SHIFT 9
Partner with parents, community, and private sector

- Every parent equipped to support child's learning
- Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) to provide input on curriculum and teacher quality from 2016
- Attracting more potential sponsors to expand trust schools to 500 by 2025

SHIFT 5
Guarantee high performing school leaders

- Principals to be selected via competency and enhanced succession from 2013
- Principal career package rolling out in 2013 with improved operational flexibility and sharper accountability to improve student outcome

SHIFT 10
Maximise student outcomes

- Programmes linked to clear student outcomes; shift towards outcome-based budgeting
- Efficiency opportunities captured, with funding reallocated to critical areas

SHIFT 11
Increase transparency for public accountability

- Annual public report on blueprint progress from 2013
- Stock-takes every five years beginning from 2015 to ensure relevant stakeholder feedback is taken into consideration

7. PUBLIC SERVICE

7.1 Article 132 of Federal Constitution of Malaysia inter alia defines public services consist armed forces, judicial and legislative, general public service of the Federation, police force, public service in each State and education service. The qualifications for appointment and conditions of service of persons in public services may be regulated by law federal law and, subject to the provisions of any such law, by the King. Meanwhile, qualifications for appointment and conditions of service of persons in the public service of any State may be regulated by State law and subject to the provisions of any such law, by the King or the President's State of the State.

7.2 Public Service Department (PSD) is a central agency responsible in formulating public policy for the federal civil service officers. The policies under the responsibility of PSD were remuneration, organizational development and human capital services. PSD is also responsible in respect of pension affairs, psychology and information technology. The impact of policy that produced by PSD will be enforced by all ministry and agency, including state civil service, federal statutory body and local authorities by adopting and adapting of the said policy. The policy can only be enforced by those parties after its agreed by the respective State Government, Statutory Body Board and local council.

7.3 In exercising the development and management function, PSD need to determine the Organizational Development Policies, Career Development Policy, Career Path, Succession Planning and Training Policy. Beside that, PSD also managing the appointment, emplacement, remuneration, promotion, retirement benefits, service conditions, employer-employee relations, training and human resource database. Another core business of PSD are to formulate and clarify policies on the above mentioned matters to implementer agencies and finally to manage policies monitoring and to manage policies evaluation.

7.4 Like the previous cluster, prior to issuing any new policies or amend existing policies, PSD will invite representatives from other parties to obtain preliminary views on the new policy. Each view will be taken into account to ensure that this new policy will not contradict with existing policy. After getting a view from internal level (divisions in PSD), a form of discussions with interested parties will be implementad. The interested parties are depending on the target

group of the new policy. Among the ministries that have established engagement in the policy making with PSD are Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. The two ministries, recorded the large number of public officials and scattered across the country. For example hospitals and schools that are governed by the two ministries are located almost in every district and town in the country. The large number of officials with multilingual background and it consist all the service scheme, will certainly helps PSD getting a holistic view of each layer officers. Engagement with other ministries were also carried out with regard of the ministries core business and the concept of the new policy.

7.5 Furthermore, involvement with the trade union such as CUEPACS, NUTP, Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysian Armed Forces, Malaysian Medical Association, Malaysian Dental Association, the Malaysian Association Academic Council and the Council of Registrars are also implemented. As a result, by engaging these interested parties, the formulation of new policies or amendment of present policy would be more transparent, open and generally accepted. Indirectly, it will reduce complaints from respective parties. In reality, whenever a new policy is introduced, there are several parties would feel dissatisfied. PSD, in the most possible manner, would endeavour to minimize the dissatisfaction among civil servants due to the introduction of any new policy. Among others, the remuneration policy needs a lot of involvement with trade union, desk officer, stakeholders and others. Public sector servants have been through some salary review process began with the SSB in 1992, SSM in 2002, SBPA in November 2011 and the improvement of SSM on 1 January 2012. In the latest review process, CUEPACS had requested to participate directly in the process of drafting a new salary of civil servants and had been given the recognition through the appointment of a chance CUEPACS President as a member of the Special Commission To Study Transformation of the Public Service.

“Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announcement at a gathering with civil servants at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre :

- Existing Malaysian Remuneration System (SSM) would be reintroduced with improvements;
- Matrix salary schedule would be improved to reflect minimum-maximum salaries with increments ranging from RM80 to RM320 for grades 1 to 54.
- The annual increment for JUSA grades will remain according to the SSM;

- Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) to be increased from RM200 to RM250 for the B area, and from RM100 to RM150 for the C area;
- Setting up of a commission to execute a comprehensive study of the remuneration system for civil servants.”

7.6 Indeed, one must admit that time has changed, the public, government and private sectors are now in a time of information explosion. Many inputs, facts and information about anything can be achieved easily and quickly from the wonder of technology called the Internet. CUEPACS as a large labour union in the civil service has an experienced officer, and all equipment and standby request to collect data, information either through the field survey or using the Internet. In fact, the Government should have listened to CUEPACS' view or respond as 'gift' and strategic partners, rather than from the 'enemy'.

7.7 In negotiation regarding salary in private sector, the Government, MEF (Malaysian Employers Union) and MTUC have established councils to discuss the minimum wage in trapatize.

7.8 Thus, an engagement with the interested party should be viewed with an open heart and positive by the government. A little right for the sake of greater benefit for the future.

8. CHALLENGES

8.1 It is recognized that a country's advanced intensifies the need to have excellent working relationships with civil society in decision-making. Some major contributors that influence the development and rapid adoption of the involvement of civil society as well as increased the challenge include:

i. Increased urbanization

The more residents of a country lives in the city would increase the need for a network of relationships with civil society. The citizens and non-governmental bodies will demand an active participation in policy and decision making.

ii. Increased diversity in the community and government

Diversity in society and the government spark an important role in bilateral relations between the two parties. Both are fundamental in producing an effective and interactive communication, regardless of their beliefs or position.

iii. Increased willingness of society / people

People's expectation of the government are rising. In Malaysia with the privatization and corporatization, high society's aspirations are boomed. This is not only relevant in respect of the service or services provided alone but also on quality.

iv. Increased scrutiny of the people

People are more aware of government spending. On their own or through non-governmental organizations, the people monitor or closely monitor each project financing and government spending at all levels.

v. Increased exposure

With communication systems and rapidly advanced growing technology, people become more exposed to the local and global issue. They will quickly able to be updated with any information. As a result, people become quick, efficient and smart. They will speed criticize if the government fail to deliver what it has promised.

vi. Increased communication technology

Increased communication technology is growing challenges. Everybody can disseminate information / opinion widely. Many people have their own websites or blogs or both. People has become more expose to a variety of good or bad influences.

vii. Increased civil society

Due to enhancement of education and exposure, people are now interested in association and participation in domestic affairs. They need information to help them understand and participate in national development.

8.2 There are six major factors that encourage the government to be more sensitive and responsive to public opinion. They are:

- i. increasing needs of the people seeking clarification, information and guidance. This is because the amount and complexity of the issues and public problems getting inflated;
- ii. changing role of government. Changing attitude from the enforcement to as a more charitable. This should be done by the government to obtain the support and participation of the people;
- iii. requirements for support of policies that formed the government. People are exposed to multiple sources of information and they are not usually friendly to the government. To capture their hearts and minds, the government should have good communication experts to create customer-friendly program;
- iv. requirement to obtain acceptance from the people who want to enact law or make any amendment. A good example is the drafting of amendments to the constitution and abolish the immunity of the Kings. Another good example is when the drafting of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1984. The act mandatory impose the death penalty on drug traffickers. A Parliamentary Select Committee was set up to go directly to the people across the country to get their blessing. The Committee held public meetings in seven cities, and met 450 organizations and

- individuals. The task of this Committee is to encourage to have the overwhelming support from the people;
- v. the increase of people getting information from various sources, whether local or global. NGOs and CSOs have complete equipment and sophisticated communication channels and be able to use it to disseminate useful information to the people to ensure that government is transparent and sensitive to the needs of the people;
 - vi. the increase people's own communication tools such as the Internet and mobile phones. This stimulates them to build support to empower their community opinion.

9. CONCLUSION

It is clear that the involvement of the various parties in assisting the government to formulate a transparent policy is now been implemented. Challenges that arise are not obstacles for both parties to reach an agreement. The most important thing is, the result of the involvement and cooperation from those parties would have a greater prosperity and peacefull nation.