

New Year Message

Written by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah
Thursday, 01 January 2015 11:34 -

It has been a sad and horrible 2014 for all Malaysians. The news, of economic trends, man-made (the two MH and the latest Air Asia airplane crashes, and the Cameron Highlands landslides) and natural disasters (the floods), and of political and ethnic relations setbacks, all made last year our annus horribilis. Little wonder Malaysia, long tiring of being bogged down by negativities, is overdue for some positive and lifting news in 2015.

Doubtless we have made great strides since Independence. Our people are invariably better fed, more educated and on the whole more prosperous. But we are seemingly not that happy, much less satisfied. Relative to our potential as a people, goaded on by our very own diversity, many think we can do more towards a new vision of development. And in comparison with our neighbors, we are some years behind some of them. As we enter the New Year, we are reminded of how far we have deviated from the original path of economic, political and social development set by our founding fathers six decades ago. Some of the more serious developments, such as the increasing polarization in race relations, the narrowing of perspectives on religion and religious practices long accepted, the many intractable and new imbalances and inequalities in our economy, and a politics that clouds the vision of a maturing democratic system, seem to have set everything back by a few decades.

We have to find solutions to our current economic troubles, whether these involve the negative impact of falling oil prices on government finances, or the rising cost of living and household indebtedness, or the profound social consequences of corruption, or inequalities in income and wealth in terms of access to proper housing, high-paying jobs, or helplessness of new poverty. We need to improve the quality of our health and education system and make better use of the public dollar. We need to stabilize our political system by reaffirming the Federal Constitution, reform of how politics is funded, and clean up our electoral and party system so as to establish more consistent and fairer electoral outcomes in order to protect our emerging democracy. We need also to secure our borders, and guarantee the safety of our citizens at home, at work or on the streets. To achieve a new deal for our nation and its people, we also need our systems of law and governance to be put right.

With a determined leadership, I think these negative trends can and must be reversed. Let us reset the economics, unchain the politics and release the common energy locked in our collective hearts diminished by everything that tries to differentiate us. Let us put all things right, and do the right thing by us, everyone of us: Malays, Chinese, Indians, Dayaks, Muruts, Kadazan Dusun, Bidayuh, Orang Asal, Penan, all. And let us not leave anyone behind. Let us not envy the successful, but honour them; let us not let down the downtrodden, but lift them; and let us not succumb to disappointment, but give them hope.

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I call on all Malaysians, of every colour, creed and religion, to cast aside our differences and come together as one true Malaysian people. Let us all pray to God for guidance and deliverance.

I would like to wish everyone, young and old, a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah

Member of Parliament Gua Musang

Kuala Lumpur, January 1st 2015.