






CPPS Annual Report 2011

About the Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS)

The Centre for Public Policy Studies is an independent and non-partisan public policy institute that aims at fostering open-minded dialogue, enlightened leadership and better governance. The belief underpinning the establishment of the CPPS is that the challenge of building a cohesive, competitive and successful multi-racial Malaysian society can best be met by open discussion buttressed by rigorous analytical work and a spirit of tolerance and respect for the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders in the country.

Presently, the persistence of deep divides and disparities on a wide array of fronts – such as education, employment, health care, housing and infrastructure – points to the urgent need for better strategies and new policies to address systemic inadequacies. These divides and disparities are found not only in the economic sectors, but also in social and cultural spheres. Through an innovative mix of policy research, strategic communications and targeted outreach, the Centre's mission is to engage and educate the public and policy makers on best practice policies and successful change strategies that can ensure inclusive development for all Malaysians.

Our Mission

-  Undertake high quality policy research on issues of public interest and concern
-  Ensure our research products and policy recommendations reach policy makers, advocates, and the public
-  Maximize impact on policy-making by developing programs, products and outreach strategy which are tailored towards key target audiences

The Structure

Chairman

Tan Sri Ramon V. Navaratnam
Director, ASLI & Chairman, CPPS

Vice Chairman

Dato' Michael Yeoh
CEO, ASLI & Vice Chairman, CPPS

Advisory Panel Members

Dr Asma Abdullah
Adjunct Professor, Department of Human Resource Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia & Consultant, Culture Dynamics; Part time lecturer at Graduate School of Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Datuk David Chua
Managing Director, DC & A Group Sdn Bhd

Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria
Chair, Secretary Special Implementation Taskforce, Cabinet Committee on the Indian, Prime Minister's Office



Prof. James Chin

Head of School of Arts & Social Sciences, Monash University

Dato' Dr. Gan Khuan Poh

Chairman, Lintramax Sdn Bhd & Executive Chairman, Carta Bernas Sdn Bhd

Mr Tan Koon Swan

Chairman, Tungling Group & Former President, Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA)

Professor Dr. Rajah Rasiah

Professor, Department of Development Studies, University of Malaya

Dato' Dr. R. Thillainathan

Director, Asia Capital Reinsurance Malaysia Sdn Bhd

Dr. Sieh Lee Mei Ling

Advisor, Services Research and Innovation Centre; Senior Research Fellow, University of Malaya; Honorary Professor, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

Y. Bhg. Dato' Seri Kee Yong Wee

Chairman, Kee Group Sdn Bhd

Y. Bhg. Tan Sri Yong Poh Kon

Co-Chairman, PEMUDAH & Former President, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers & Managing Director, Royal Selangor International Sdn. Bhd.

Ms. Tricia Yeoh

Director, Dynamic Search Sdn. Bhd. & Former Research Officer to Selangor Menteri Besar

The Team

Director

Research Executive

Research & Admin Assistant

Research Associate

Interns

Ms. Ng Yeen Seen

Ms. Eva Christodoulou

Ms. Nor Arlene Tan

Ms. Thilaga Sulathireh (Part-time)

Ms. Tilottama Roy (contract April-June 2011)

Mr. Andro Pentchev

Mr. Lincoln Hines

Mr. Noah Azlan Ngah

Mr. Jeremy Ng

Ms. Tilottama Roy



Director's Note:

CPPS is a purpose-driven organization aimed at creating a better society. Our commitment to this mission drives our young team to work diligently and lays the groundwork for us to contribute towards making Malaysia a better society. It is gratifying to my entire team and myself that we uphold the same values and principles as we strive to do our best every day.

For the first time, CPPS was ranked **#16 out of 1198 think tanks in Asia** in the *2011 Global Go To Think Tank Report* released in New York on the 18 January 2011 conducted by the University of Pennsylvania and United Nations Universities. CPPS was the only Malaysian think tank, and ranked **29th** in the **Top 30 Transparency and Good Governance Think Tank**; and ranked **#14 for Top Think Tanks with annual operating budget of less than USD5m**.

The year 2011 was a challenging one. The team then was new and young. Today, I am honoured to share that through our growth strategy we have so many opportunities ahead of us. This reflects sound execution of our plans, which center on streamlining our focus and disciplined approach to resource management. The much anticipated 13th General Election may be a favorable tailwind for think tanks, yet we realize that we need to continuously pursue our aggressive plans.

Working with the resources at hand, we will continue to sustain our dedication, integrity, quality, commitment and innovation in order to sustain our growth.

Activities/Projects undertaken in 2011:

Oral History

Early this year, the CPPS embarked on an oral history project to document the untold and unseen stories of 10 selected Tuns who have been critical in the Malaysian history. The project was intended to result in an hour-long documentary for each Tun to be released in August 2011 in conjunction with the Merdeka month.

The project was divided to two phases: 1) formulating interview questions from existing information (memoirs, biography, newspaper articles) 2) interviews with the Tuns. Phase 1 was completed. However, phase 2 has not been carried out due to lack of funding. The CPPS is still seeking grants to complete this project. On this project the CPPS was assisted by a group of academics from the Sunway University.

Minimum wage

Ms Ng Yeen Seen, the director of the CPPS was appointed as a Member of the Technical Committee to the National Wages Consultative Council (NWCC) to examine and analyse the Minimum Wage



Policy for Malaysia. The CPPS released two fact sheets on minimum wage which were published on the CPPS website; an introduction of minimum wage and another one specifically on legislation from around the world on minimum wage in a few selected countries.

Open Budget Index

The Open Budget Index (OBI) is an effort mooted by the International Budget Partnership to observe and assess if countries were meeting basic standards of transparency and accountability with national budgets. The index aims to detect abuse and inappropriate and inefficient use of public money and consequently, increase accountability and transparency of the state.

This year, the Centre for Public Policy Studies will again participate in the study for the third time. As a research partner, the CPPS will complete a standard questionnaire to evaluate and assess the budget transparency in Malaysia.

Malaysia scored 39 out of 100 points, which is less than the average score of 42, in the OBI for the year 2010. A total of 94 countries participated in the survey.

The project commenced in September and is scheduled to end by December. The report will be published in 2012.

Budget Roundtable and Workshop

On September 5th 2011, the CPPS organized a budget round table on Budget Transparency. This was specifically designed for the Members of Parliament, Civil Society, and Policy Analysts. It was decided to organize two separate sessions for the roundtable, to allow better interaction with the resource person and allow smoother discussion without being held back due to political differences. The objective of the round table discussions was to provide best practices that can be adopted in terms of budget formulation processes and public engagement in Malaysia. Each round table was attended by 10-15 participants.

On September 6th 2011, a budget workshop was held and was attended by some 25 people from various backgrounds – students, members of civil society and political aides. The workshop was to familiarize the participants with the budget processes, terminologies and ways to engage the state for this particular issue.

Both the roundtables and the workshop were facilitated by Mr. Anthony Baker, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Finance and Deregulation of Australia.

Election Watch/ Laporan Rakyat

The Laporan Rakyat was a joint initiative by the CPPS and UndiMalaysia, which aims to assist the rakyat in assessing the performance of their current ADUN (Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri) as well as MP (Member of Parliament) and subsequently to encourage critical thinking amongst the rakyat in



order to make informed decisions for their own communities. The Laporan Rakyat is part of a bigger election watch campaign embarked by CPPS.

While the Laporan Rakyat was piloted at Hulu Langat, Selangor, it was also made available on the UndiMalaysia and CPPS' websites. Several NGOs too have uploaded the Laporan Rakyat onto their respective websites.

The Laporan Rakyat was launched on November 18, 2011 at the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI). The launch cum press conference which was panelled by Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, Chairman of the CPPS, Ng Yeen Seen, Director of the CPPS, Edmund Bon and Adam Adili, campaigners of UndiMsia! and was attended by some 15 members of the media.

An assessment of the project will be made based on the data collated and the findings released by March-April 2012.

Revamping our website

This year, the CPPS decided to give the CPPS website a new look in order to better organize the information on the website and to make it more user friendly. The CPPS is working with XIMNET on this project, and the new website will go live by January 2012.

CPPS/Otak-Otak Networking Session

A Talk on Malaysian Political Freedom and Youth Political Empowerment

This event was part of the Otak-Otak Programme, designed to promote political awareness for the young people of Malaysia. In collaboration with the Otak-Otak forum the CPPS organized an informal talk for around thirty university students and college and high school graduates participating in the Otak-Otak programme to interact and share their opinions. The event took place at Leonardo's Dining Wine and Loft, a restaurant in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, on the 12th July 2011. In line with CPPS's ideals, the event aimed at increasing public participation and awareness among the young Malaysians particularly by exposing them to the ideas of various distinguished guest speakers - Mr. Jason Tan as a media insider spoke about the reality of the media industry and its impact at the freedom of media in Malaysia; while Ms Tricia Yeoh having worked at the Selangor Chief Minister Office shared her opinions on the political implications of the BERSIH 2.0 rally. Mr. Lim Teck Hoe being actively involved in youth politics discussed the importance of youth empowerment and participation in politics. In an inspiring and informal environment, the students that participated had the opportunity to raise important questions and debate among themselves as well as the guest speakers, in a fruitful evening. The panel covered topics relating to current affairs in Malaysia, and ranged from public policy effectiveness, youth issues and concerns, freedom of speech and freedom and effectiveness of the media, to politics. The students also shared their desires and hopes for a changed and transformed Malaysia.



Cloud Computing Project:

Cloud Computing – Uncovering the Malaysian market’s readiness for Cloud Computing.

In collaboration with Microsoft Malaysia, the CPPS (and ASLI) undertook a research study on the economic impact that the widespread adoption of cloud computing technology may have on the Malaysian economy. The project started in July 2011, and it was part of a much wider study that Microsoft is undertaking around the world, for which key countries were chosen for the study of the impact of cloud technology. CPPS conducted the study for Malaysia.

The project was in line with CPPS aims of assessing ripple effects and consequences of events on the Malaysian economy, and identifying ways to progress, as well as promoting the national competitiveness of the country.

The study looked at the impact that cloud computing may have in four key areas –education, SME Development, Human Capital Development and Government Procurement, by analyzing in-depth interviews conducted with experts from each field, as well as academic feedback. Moreover, the current status of the Malaysian IT industry is also being assessed, in order to conclude on the readiness of Malaysia for the widespread use of cloud computing. Finally, the technology itself is assessed, to demonstrate how beneficial or otherwise it is for Malaysia and its industries.

A draft report was submitted to Microsoft in February 2012, pending feedback.

Economic Freedom Network Conference:

CPPS joined forces with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and IDEAS, acting as the local organizer collaborating with IDEAS, to co-organise the EFN Asia Chapter Conference in Kuala Lumpur. The conference took place on the 10th-13th October 2011 at The Royale Chulan Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, and attracted 180 delegates from around the world. EFN Asia is a growing network of research institutes, practitioners, influential think tanks and individuals that aim to promote the benefits of civil society, market economy and individual liberty. The event attracted individuals from around the world, especially Asia, and was an attempt to discuss and promote competition in the economy. In line with the recently passed competition law in Malaysia, this was a very timely conference, and it attracted much attention from politicians and the media alike. The event launched the Annual Economic Freedom of the World 2011 Report, by the Fraser Institute, and culminated in the drafting of a resolution that participants put together by the end of the final day.

Distinguished speakers came from various countries and discussed/presented their country’s experiences and attempts to promote competition. Debates on the role of the government as a regulator or player in the markets were manifold, and the delegates had plenty of chances for discussions, debates, exchange of experiences, and, of course, networking.

The topics addressed throughout the conference included a debate on what should be the role of the government in markets, competition in public service delivery, a presentation of the key findings of



the Annual Economic Freedom of the World 2011 Report, and issues pertaining to competition policies and their enforcement. Various viewpoints were given for each issue in the form of case studies, academic references, as well as personal opinions.

2011 Malaysia Day Celebration Dialogue:

The Dialogue of the Moderates: Religion-a unifying factor?

In conjunction with the National celebration of the Malaysia Day and to commemorate the diversity of the Malaysian society, a short session took place on the 16th September in the cosy environment of Opus restaurant in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, with CPPS as the main organizer and FAN (Friedrich Naumann Alumni Network) as co-organiser. A panel of 3 guest speakers was invited to discuss the role and impact of religion in the Malaysian society. The guest speakers were Dr. Herman Shastri, Secretary-General of the Malaysian Association of the Churches, Ms Nora Murat, Executive Director of Amnesty International, and Mr. Malik Imtiaz, Human Rights Lawyer and lecturer at University of Malaya. Ms Ng Yeen Seen took the role of the Moderator.

Dr. Herman Shastri stressed that religion is used to politicize differences and to substantiate reality. He believes humanity ought to play a role in unifying the nation; hence he emphasized the importance of depoliticizing religion through a secular state and inter-faith movements. Ms Nora Murat emphasized human rights as the unifying factor for Malaysia and highlighted the importance of upholding religious values among believers. She commented on the historical political conversation of Malaysia that has evolved into a religious theme. She is against religion tapping into state affairs, as she believes it has grave consequences to the judiciary system and the plight of women. Mr. Malik Imtiaz shared the historical development of Syariah Court in Malaysia and stated that up until 1999, the Supreme Court had been secular, where Muslims were free to change their faith at the Syariah Court. Since then, the issue of an Islamic state has been manipulated into the political currency for populist appeal. He also shared some thoughts on the nature of Islam, which is non-monolithic, and beyond the political realm.

In concluding the talk, Dr. Herman Shastri noted that it is important to have an open discussion, especially in offering critical views about religion; Mr. Malik Imtiaz talked about the role of individual initiative on nation-building, focusing at the grassroots level; while Ms Nora Murat promoted youth engagement in cultural understanding, and also stressed that the media ought to include more bridge-building stories and best practices in the news.

Roundtable Discussion on Building Bridges Between Religions: Promoting Dialogues and Understanding

This 3-hour roundtable session was organized by the CPPS on the 29th September 2011 at Sunway University, Bandar Sunway. The session brought together various experts from different fields to discuss the subject of how to rebuild bridges and promote dialogue between religions here in



Malaysia by sharing experiences, opinions, and examples from abroad. The main objectives of the roundtable were to listen to the opinions of the distinguished guest speaker, Rv. Fr. Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, an expert in the field of inter-religious dialogue and Rector of the Pontifical Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, and assess the current situation of the Malaysian reality while proposing ways of improving the current initiatives and find solutions to move closer to better communication among different religious groups.

The roundtable was part of CPPS' initiatives to reinforce high standards of engagement, commitment to the cause of accelerating Malaysia's unity and bringing many people together, from various walks of life, to discuss in a fruitful and productive environment how they view Malaysia's situation right now, and what needs to be done in order to accelerate its transformation to a more united religious landscape.

Rev. Fr. Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot has worked extensively as a missionary in Egypt and Sudan, he taught Islamology in the Inter-diocesan Major Seminary at St. Paul in Khartoum and the Teacher Training Centre of the Christian Religion in Khartoum and has been a professor of Arabic and Islamology in Dar Comboni Center for Arabic Studies in Cairo. Tan Sri Ramon acted as the moderator of the session.

Around 40 people from different religious and occupational backgrounds attended the roundtable, including the Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Tan Sri Murphy Pakiam, and the recurring theme to be drawn from the roundtable is that immediate attention is required to reinforce inter-religious dialogue at all levels. Education, leadership and the media were identified as key drivers for any progress to be made on the subject.

Publication: Enhancing ASEAN's Connectivity

ASEAN Studies Centre (ASC) at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), along with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), convened the ASEAN Roundtable 2011 on "**Enhancing ASEAN's Connectivity**" on **5 May 2011 at Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore.**

The roundtable focused on 4 areas: **transportation** for the movement of goods and people, **telecommunications** for business and people, **ICT** for businesses, education and other developments in the region, and **energy infrastructure** for better use and distribution of resources. The attendees involved personalities from government, academia, and international financial institutions.

The objectives of the roundtable were to examine the current state of infrastructure development across ASEAN and to discuss how greater connectivity can contribute to the process of ASEAN economic integration. The roundtable addressed the national- and regional-level challenges to build a robust infrastructure and approaches to resource mobilization for this purpose.

Dato' Dr Michael Yeoh, Ms Ng Yeen Seen and Ms Tilottama Roy co-authored the paper and Dato' Dr Michael Yeoh presented the paper in Singapore. The paper is to be published as a monograph by ISEAS.



PROHAM

The Promotion of Human Rights Association of Malaysia (PROHAM) is a newly formed human rights NGO that focuses on highlighting national cases on the abuse of human rights that concern the Malaysian society at large. Dato' Dr Michael Yeoh, CEO of ASLI and Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam were among the members of PROHAM who are former commissioners of SUHAKAM.

The CPPS was involved in some of its activities this year. Among the activities involved was the roundtable discussion on the International Covenant on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in conjunction with the formal launch of PROHAM on 21st March 2011. CPPS also co-organised the roundtable discussion on US 2010 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Malaysia on 24th May 2011, which aimed to analyse the report and address important issues and concerns affecting Malaysian society.

Besides that, the CPPS also participated in a forum on "Election Loss, Election Commission and the Electoral Reform", held in the aftermath of the BERSIH 2.0 rally held on the 9th May 2011, which engaged Dato' Ambiga Sreenivasan, Chairperson of BERSIH 2.0 as one of the speakers, as well as Datuk Wira Wan Ahmad Wan Omar, Deputy Chairperson of Election Commission (SPR). The CPPS Chairperson, Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, acted as the moderator of the forum. The highly anticipated forum was held in a frank Question and Answer 'hard talk' concept and was attended by various groups and civil societies.

Aspirations for the year ahead:

The CPPS is hoping to carry on its activities and expand them further in order to serve its objectives even more effectively. On the agenda for next year, some of the projects planned are:

- i. Election Watch to resume –with the general elections not very far ahead, the CPPS aims to bring more information to the public about the election campaign, election results, possible outcomes, analysis, and the results of a close watch of the parliamentary select committee on electoral reform.
- ii. Electoral reform – going hand in hand with the election watch plan, the CPPS will aim at assessing whether plans for electoral reform are being implemented effectively, and whether the parliamentary select committee set to oversee electoral reform is actually producing results.



- iii. Further research on competition law –with competition law effective from January next year, the CPPS plans on providing updates on its effects on the Malaysian economy, drawing on comparisons from the international arena.
- iv. Free Trade Agreement –with the increasing globalization as well as the increasing steps towards regionalism, the CPPS is currently conducting talks with a prestigious think tank of another country with the aim of carrying out a joint study on the effects of a free trade agreement between the two nations.
- v. Newsletters –starting from next year, the CPPS aims to produce quarterly newsletters in order to keep the public informed about various activities as well as various issues that concern the Malaysian society and economy, the ASEAN region, as well as the international environment in general.
- vi. Policy analysis and publication of a yearly journal. The CPPS aims at producing one policy analysis paper every month, and at the end of each year, compile them in a yearly publication, available to all.

On behalf of the CPPS team,

Ng Yeen Seen

Director, CPPS