



Community Concerns from a Malaysian Perspective

Over 90 people from a cross section of Malaysian society conversed with one another on key community concerns of the Malays, Indians, Chinese, Orang Asli, indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak in a series of roundtable discussions

These discussions were hosted by the Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS-ASLI) and the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA-UKM) in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education over two and half days (Oct 8,9 and 11, 2012) in Kuala Lumpur

What these conversations sought to do was identify common community concerns, issues and solutions from a national Malaysian perspective and chart out a Malaysian way of ensuring that public policies, programs and delivery will be inclusive, fair and just to all Malaysian communities so that no community or group feels that they are left out or neglected.

As participants of this series of roundtable discussions:-

We hope for more open conversations across the table so as to engage and reason out together in the Malaysian style of 'consensus building' with all stakeholders including young people and the grassroots.

We recognise that in recent years these kinds of conversations have been ignored and therefore must be revived so as to facilitate the sharing of differing views and enhance the space for 'public reasoning' which will enable the triumph of moderation over extreme views and position.

We affirm a deep sense of patriotism to this land Malaysia and express optimism that our nation is rich in resources and talents for collective engagement for the common good of all.

We are convinced that we can collectively address the fears, insecurities, sense of deprivation and marginalisation experienced by certain sections of our society especially those in the bottom 40% of the socio-economic divide.

We recognise that political leadership is essential and therefore we call on all political parties to ensure that they refrain from just championing their ethnic issues from a race and religious dimension but focus on cross cutting concerns which are holistic and incorporating the views of other groups who share a similar plight so as to build national consciousness and an effective action plan

We note that in drawing up national public policies, the specific needs and issues faced by certain sections of our community must not be neglected but must also become the key priority of government in making adequate allocation of resources with the support of all community groups.

We understand that effective delivery and implementation is most essential and therefore we hope for a greater ethnic diversity in the civil service and a greater degree of empathy for the concerns of all communities especially those at the bottom 40% of the socio economic ladder irrespective of racial, religious, gender, geographical and class differences.

We call on the Prime Minister to establish a Social Inclusion Unit at the Prime Minister's office with the reintroduction of the Tun Razak's Red book and operations centres at the grassroots which can serve as a forum for the grassroots to voice their concerns and to monitor effective delivery and address the current gaps so as to ensure social justice for all.

Released by:- Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam (Chairman, ASLI-CPPS) and Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria (Principal Research Fellow, KITA-UKM). Oct 12, 2012