

TN50x and the Future of Malaysia: The Corporate View

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Corporate input needed for Transformasi Nasional 2050: Khairy

Youth and Sports YB Minister Khairy Jamaluddin called on members of the Kuala Lumpur Business Club to articulate their aspirations and concerns for Malaysia's new initiative, the Transformasi Nasional 2050 (TN50).

"The idea for having this dialogue with you tonight came about after going around the country since January, trying to gather and collate details from young Malaysians on their hopes, dreams and aspirations over the next 30 years," he said at an update and dialogue session entitled "TN50x and the Future of Malaysia: The Corporate View".

"We are looking wider now, we need to reach out to introduce and explain what we have been doing so far. Each ministry will start to engage with its own stakeholders. We will look at the hopes of our young people and also the wise counsel of our not-so-young people," YB Khairy explained.

TN50 Engagement has involved 1.5 million young Malaysians

Consultations for TN50 were announced by YAB Prime Minister Najib Razak in his 2016 budget speech. The first wave of engagement started in January and has involved around 1.5 million young Malaysians, through nationwide face-to-face meetings and various online interactions with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. So far, YB Khairy has collected over 40,000 specific aspirations from young Malaysians.

The data from these aspirations has been grouped into five topics, namely: (i) work & value creation; (ii) living & wellbeing; (iii) governance; (iv) society; and (v) lifestyle. Each topic has its own 'Circle of the Future' consisting of ten youths and three experts, to discuss the issues raised.

Widening engagement to include all government ministries and their stakeholders

The TN50 initiative is now widening to include all ministries of the Malaysian government. At the end of 2017, all data and proposals will be delivered to the Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department, with the goal of releasing TN50 as an official document on Malaysia Day 2018. Further detail can be found at <https://mytn50.com/>

"We need to reach out to the private sector, to the corporate world, and introduce and explain what we have been doing," YB Khairy told the 80 KLBC members, reporters and TN50 participants gathered for the event and a *buka puasa* at Menara CIMB. "These aspirations will not be free, they will cost money, and we have to balance spending for the future against fixing things now."

From the 40,000 aspirations collected so far from young Malaysians, the Ministry of Youth and Sports found certain issues had great levels of resonance.

Malaysians first, race and ethnicity second

“We have been through all these aspirations and trying to make sense of what these young people want. The principle identity that young Malaysians want by 2050 is to be Malaysian, so race and ethnicity is not used as something to divide them politically,” YB Khairy said.

In particular, young Malaysians feel strongly that they want a country that is fair, where deserving, hardworking Malaysians are granted assistance regardless of background.

Young Malaysians also want a sustainable Malaysia, where economic growth is not at the expense of the environment and is more equitably distributed. They want fewer shopping malls and more parks. They want an education system that means Malaysia can keep up with the world. They want a Malaysia that is happy, where they can have fulfilling lives, time for their family, for arts and for hobbies.

Masa Depan Negaraku

Malaysia’s first long-term plan was the New Economic Policy (1971-1990) to eradicate absolute poverty, irrespective of race and eliminate identification of race by economic function.

The second long-term plan was Vision 2020 (1991-2000) to become a developed nation with the three phases of the National Development Policy, National Vision Policy and New Economic Model.

The third long-term plan, Transformasi Nasional 2050, will run from 2021-2050 and envisages Malaysia as a top 20 nation in economic development, social advancement and innovation. The details and key deliverables of TN50 have yet to be decided and consultations are underway.

“TN50 is a continuum and reflects the spirit of the times. We have always been a country with one eye on the present and one eye on the future. We are trying to futureproof our country so that whatever comes our way we have prepared ourselves as much as possible,” YB Khairy said.

Tengku Dato’ Sri Zafrul Aziz, KLBC President and Group Chief Executive Officer of CIMB Group, introduced YB Khairy as “a Brigadier General in the Territorial Army, a sportsman, family man and politician.” He first spoke to KLBC in 2013 when he addressed the hopes and fears of Malaysian youth.

YB Khairy has been the Member of Parliament for Rembau, Negeri Sembilan since 2008 and Minister for Youth and Sports since 2013. He has also been the president of the UMNO youth wing since 2009.

On more specific aspirations for 2050 from young Malaysians, YB Khairy mentioned a ban on selling cigarettes, progress on obesity and cardiovascular disease, and a decision on whether

Malaysia should adopt nuclear power, and a clearer focus on education, English and science. Smarter cities and more infrastructure in rural areas were also raised on a regular basis.

Deciding what to plan for 2050

Like the rest of the world, Malaysia is currently grappling with fast changing technological and productivity breakthroughs that make the future look very different to the present. Around 65 percent of jobs in Malaysia are categorized as high risk of being replaced by automation in the coming years. At the same time, household debt makes up 90 percent of national gross domestic product and Malaysia still relies quite heavily on imported labour and has lower levels of productivity compared to neighbouring Thailand and Singapore.

Food security is increasingly important, with Malaysia's annual food imports making a RM20 billion deficit last year. By 2050, population projections suggest Malaysia will be an ageing society with more citizens over 60 than under 15. At the same time, life expectancy is increasing, but the average EPF account would only provide four years of pension at current levels. Some countries have already done away with an official retirement age in order to adjust to these new realities.

The ongoing brain drain of Malaysian talent continues, many jobs will likely be lost to automation and the participation of women in the workforce is low. Although women make up 60-70 percent of the student population in many Malaysian universities, they only make up 40 percent of the workforce. In addition, around 60 percent of the jobs that currently exist will be obsolete by the time primary school students enter the workforce.

"Now we have these Circles of the Future. We have young people and older counsel to discuss in greater detail about what kind of vision statements to put through, and how and where should the government invest taxpayer's money?" YB Khairy said.

Role of Religion

The most hotly contested of the five discussion circles is the one on society, and in particular, religion and the role of Islam in society. "There is a great diversity of views when it comes to religion, there are those who want to see greater encroachment of religion into the public space and those who want it to be pushed back," YB Khairy said.

"I want to go where Islam is a force for good and a benign force, caring and compassionate."

There are proposals for pilot primary schools that teach some subjects in Malay and some in English, with good Mandarin Chinese and Tamil provision coupled a good arts programme, to appeal to all Malaysians.

Government to use input to help decision-making

When asked about the budget for such proposals and the general costs of TN50, YB Khairy said the upcoming 2017 budget would be the first to address TN50 thinking and financing, with ideas and proposals taking on more substance going into 2018.

“By October this year, we will have some sense about what Malaysians think. We have a bottom-up approach to this, but we cannot be run by direct democracy. It is the role of government at the end of the day to exercise political judgement and use our finite resources and finite political capital for the future of Malaysia,” YB Khairy said.

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