

## CHAPTER V

# The Sociological, Political and Security Dimensions of Development

### I. INTRODUCTION

271. The Third Malaysia Plan (TMP) falls within the framework of the Perspective Plan and forms a logical extension of the Second Malaysia Plan (SMP) and the New Economic Policy (NEP). Though national unity remains the overriding objective of development, it is now recognized that this must be achieved not only through eradication of poverty and restructuring society, but also through the maintenance and improvement of the security of the nation.

272. The current Chapter focuses attention on the sociological, political and security factors that underlie the socio-economic goals of the nation as embodied in the *Rukunegara*. The *Rukunegara* provides the ideological foundations for a common value system among Malaysians which transcends ethnic, cultural and socio-economic differences within the nation. It symbolizes the aspirations of all Malaysians for bringing into reality the goals upon which the nation was created. Socio-economic factors influence in many ways the progress that can be made towards creating the united and resilient society envisaged by the *Rukunegara*. The NEP was framed to provide the essential guidelines by which constructive progress could be made in fashioning the socio-economic environment necessary for strengthening the beliefs of the nation and realizing its goals for a united nation.

273. The efforts necessary for the purpose will extend beyond the purely economic dimension to encompass as well the more intangible aspects of planning, with problems and preconditions that cannot be quantified or objectively measured or projected. However, they also represent the realities of Malaysian societal configuration and to ignore them in the context of the TMP is to ignore some of the critical constraints and challenges that the nation must now face in its present stage of socio-economic transformation.

## **II. PERSPECTIVE OF A PLURAL SOCIETY**

274. Malaysia's development efforts have always been pursued in the context of a plural society. The achievements and the problems faced by the nation in the last five years have indicated the need for a renewed awareness of the fundamental issues generated by growth and change within such a society and the imperatives that must be satisfied if future well being is to be ensured. These overriding issues and imperatives discussed in the following paragraphs will, therefore, become the sociological benchmarks for all development efforts in the TMP period.

### **Strength in diversity**

275. History has shown that ethnic and cultural diversity in Malaysia has not weakened the nation but allowed it to achieve one of the fastest rates of development in Southeast Asia. The strength has been founded on mutual respect and co-operation and a commitment to common goals and aspirations. These qualities of the nation and the people need to be further strengthened and mobilized if the challenges that lie ahead are to be overcome.

276. The strength of the nation lies squarely on the willingness of all Malaysian citizens, irrespective of race, culture and religion to give their fullest support to the national development goals. These goals should become the rallying point for the entire nation. It is only this unity of purpose that can turn Malaysia's diversity into one of the strongest assets for the nation.

### **Misconception of the perspectives of development**

277. A dangerous misconception about the national goals of poverty eradication and restructuring society is that these objectives are intended to benefit only the Malays and other indigenous people. This is not true. The poor in Malaysia involve other races as well, although the majority are the Malays and other indigenous people living in rural areas. Another misconception is in respect of urban poverty. With the migration of the Malays and other indigenous people to the urban areas, this problem is no longer limited to the other Malaysians. Urban poverty is, therefore, a multiracial problem.

278. Similarly, the goal of restructuring society does not involve increasing the participation of the Malays and other indigenous people in commerce and industry alone. It involves the achievement of a multiracial structure in all sectors and at all levels in order to correct past imbalances and their inadequate representation in various fields. This will certainly imply an inter-sectoral movement of people and ownership on a multiracial basis if all sectors of the Malaysian economy are ultimately to reflect the racial composition of the nation without detracting the role of the private sector, both local and foreign in the economy.

279. In fact, the NEP has been widely accepted by the diverse racial and economic groups in the country. This acceptance forms one aspect of Malaysia's national resilience and the mutually reinforcing benefits of the NEP establishes the perspective of a common destiny for all groups in the country. As it has been clearly demonstrated in the course of the SMP, all groups in the country were able to improve their previous economic positions without discernible economic disadvantage to any single group.

280. In terms of the TMP objectives, it is most important that all programmes are not perceived nor construed in terms of ethnological interests. It is necessary that the underlying rationale for all programmes be explained and understood in terms of the need to redistribute the benefits of development in more equitable ways commensurate with the ideals of promoting social justice through the eradication of poverty and the creation of a truly Malaysian image in all sectors of the national economy. It calls for responsible co-operation on the part of all and an awareness of the problems faced by the poor and the disadvantaged. Only these will ensure that the goals of eradicating poverty and restructuring society will appear in their proper perspective against the overall needs of the nation.

281. The responsibility for overcoming an ethnological perspective of development goals and strategies in Malaysia lies both with the Government and the people. An over-emphasis on the special rights of the Malays and other indigenous people by public officials will generate apprehension and fear on the part of other Malaysians, leading to a sense of alienation and neglect. Equally, undue pressure on the part of other Malaysians for a stake over and above that envisaged by the NEP could be disruptive. Only an awareness and acceptance of the national character of the exercise to remedy the ethnological imbalance in the national economy and a refrain from making demands based on purely racial lines will enable the nation to devote full attention to these national goals.

282. The nature of resource allocation for development as discussed in Chapter XII is also directed at overcoming regional and racial imbalances. More resources will be channelled to the less developed States of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak in order to stimulate a balanced growth.

#### **National identity**

283. All the above factors point to the most crucial aspect of the nation's progress at this juncture of its development history and within the context of a plural society. This is in regard to the establishment of a true Malaysian identity based on national pride and a sense of belonging.

284. A national identity is born out of a common set of social norms and values evolved over a period of time. Thus plurality of race and the fact that Malaysia is a relatively young nation present a great challenge to the moulding of a national identity within the time-frame of the present generation. The effort calls for greater determination and sacrifice on the

part of all Malaysians. It calls for (i) a full identification and commitment to the national goals and ideals; (ii) viewing emergent problems of whatever nature in terms of a challenge to Malaysia's capability as a nation and a people; (iii) accepting the country's socio-cultural diversity as a source of pride in regard to the nation's uniqueness; and (iv) treating internal differences and conflicts as a natural process of consensus seeking in the pursuit of the most satisfying compromises and alternatives. A common national identity lies in the willingness of the people to accept the above as guidelines for action.

285. In this respect, many factors will be considered in relation to the economic goals of the nation. This underlines the need for a full understanding of some of the important background leading to the nation's struggle for Independence and the role of *Bahasa Malaysia* and the national culture to help in moulding the nation together. Thus the education system is designed for this purpose. It will inculcate a greater sense of national belonging, love for the nation, greater self-discipline and respect for the elders, appreciation of what the nation bequeaths to the people and the responsibilities expected of them in return.

286. Many of the socio-cultural characteristics nurtured over the years already exist to form the basis of this common Malaysian identity. These include a high degree of tolerance and accommodation as already manifested over the years of the nation's existence; the common respect for the elderly and the wise; hospitality; a love for peace and socially satisfying relationships; a quest for even greater tolerance and understanding; a high regard for art and culture; a great sense of devotion to duty and loyalty to relatives and friends; and above all, an abundance of goodwill and common sense as well as a spirit of humility that, by and large, have enabled the country to face and overcome the trials and tribulations of a young and multiracial nation. These qualities have been reinforced by the teachings of Islam and other religions.

287. The evolution of a Malaysian national identity will be based on an integration of all the virtues from the various cultures in Malaysia, with the Malay culture forming its core. It will also include the infusion of new characteristics that can foster the process of cultural integration and strengthen the very foundation of the multiracial society. This places an emphasis on moulding well-disciplined and responsible individuals within society, individuals who are responsive to national needs and committed to its goals and aspirations. It must consciously be evolved and nurtured through the integrative forces of the national goals. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the sociological and political implications of this process in greater detail.

### **III. A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

#### **Allocation of resources and social justice**

288. A primary focus of the Plan as shown in Chapter IV is the allocation of resources and assets to bring about a more balanced development and lessen inequalities in the context of an expanding economy. In a plural society, this involves not only a re-arrangement of priorities so that the benefits of growth and change can remedy current crucial economic imbalances but ensure that the benefits of development are equitably shared by all in the rich and poorer States alike. While the TMP has provided for these considerations, their acceptance will certainly necessitate certain adjustments of values, attitudes and expectations among all Malaysians. These involve some of the most complex sociological dimensions of development in Malaysia.

289. The nature of priorities and targets with regard to resource allocation will be discussed in Chapter XII. But the Outline Perspective Plan in Chapter IV has already reflected the macro-economic goals and rationale for the pattern of resource allocation adopted. The goals are based on the needs and potentials of our economy. The achievement of these targets will depend on the acceptability of their sociological implications and the acceptance by Malaysian society of the rationale and justification for the projected allocations. These must, therefore, be examined closely so that possible complications can be forestalled or avoided.

290. The redistributive pattern of resource allocation in the nation will only appear justifiable if carried out on the basis of clear guidelines for social and economic justice. Malaysians must fully understand and appreciate the concept and implications of social and economic justice underpinning the development plan in order to contribute to its achievement. To this end, the Government will pay particular attention to ensure that the poor of all races enjoy the benefits of development. In the same manner, the need for more participation by the Malays and other indigenous people in commerce and industry must be fully appreciated so that the co-operation and commitment of all Malaysians for this purpose can be elicited. Genuine appreciation and commitment cannot be legislated. They can only result from a full understanding of the rationale behind certain concepts and strategies.

#### **Social mobility**

291. The sociological implications of poverty eradication and restructuring involve not only a reallocation and redistribution of material resources but also the movement of people between jobs and vocation, between various socio-economic strata of society and even between physical regions. These will call for a high degree of social mobility. The TMP envisages that more farmers among the Malays and other indigenous people

will go into business while more other Malaysians will join the agricultural sector. Those currently holding low-paid jobs will be provided with avenues for moving up the socio-economic ladder. Migration out of less developed regions and States as discussed in Chapter X will be fostered, but yet controlled and balanced with enhanced opportunities provided for the development of these regions so as to underline the need for reducing regional imbalances in development. Concerted efforts will be made to remove all barriers to social mobility just as factors contributing to its attainment will be stimulated in line with the above objectives.

292. Some of the factors that influence social mobility need to be emphasized. In terms of mobility between jobs and location, there is no doubt that education and training are the key catalysts. In this respect, while the capacity of the education system will be greatly increased under the TMP as discussed in Chapter XXII, the monitoring of the system to produce people with the right expertise and in the right quantity to serve national needs will continue to be a great challenge. The Government will meet this challenge by providing the infrastructural facilities, services and an appropriate incentive system to step up education and training in areas where more qualified people are needed. This alone will not ensure that the opportunities for social mobility will be opened to the children of the poor and less fortunate Malaysians. The dropout rate of school children from this group is high. The job market after completion of secondary education is very competitive. Thus, while the Government will ensure that the education and job opportunities for the children and youth from poor families are adequate, the responsibility of optimizing on these opportunities cannot be shouldered by anyone else. Only the youth and their parents can ensure that the opportunities are not lost through their own lack of drive and perseverance.

293. Education and training to prepare the adults for vocational changes within the TMP period is a more complex problem. Adult education in the past has dealt more with overcoming illiteracy. Training given by extension workers and other Government agencies was directed more at the improvement and modernization of work methods in present jobs to increase productivity. The need to provide adult training for a change of vocation will, therefore, receive close attention under the Plan. Training of the Malays and other indigenous people for business participation is already an ongoing process and will be expanded and improved in quality.

294. For the poor and less fortunate citizens of Malaysia upward mobility involves a relentless drive for higher productivity and profitability in the chosen field of livelihood or enterprise. In the agricultural sector, while the Government is committed to the expansion and modernization of the sector, initiative and diligence will be required to get the best out of the programmes discussed in Chapter XVI. Modern irrigation facilities will not produce optimum results if adequate fertilizers and high quality seed grains as suggested by the Government are not used. It is not agriculture that hampers

upward social mobility in terms of progress in economic and social status but a lack of capability to turn it from a subsistence occupation to a business-oriented enterprise. The Government can only provide the facilities. The entrepreneurial spirit and will to be expressed through individual efforts or co-operatives must come from the farmers themselves.

295. Regional mobility from depressed to more progressive areas including from rural to urban centres occur through migration as the natural result of push-and-pull factors. Unchecked and unguided, this socio-economic phenomenon can enhance unemployment or poverty in the urban centres. Efforts have been made and will be intensified under the TMP period, as discussed in Chapters IV and X, to encourage industries to move into the rural areas, thereby providing opportunities *in situ* and managing the rural-to-urban flow. This, however, requires time since, only when the rural-based industries can absorb most of the surplus rural labour, can the drift be guided. Efforts will, therefore, be intensified to provide sufficient training programmes in the rural areas themselves so that rural youth will cease to be completely dependent upon urban centres for better life opportunities. To stop the rural-urban migration completely is not possible.

296. Thus, regional mobility through migration must become a two-way traffic. While some youth migrate to the urban centres in search of training and job opportunities, the industries' skilled workers and entrepreneurs must also move into the rural areas to stimulate the pace of development and create training and job opportunities in the rural areas themselves. The achievement of a balanced mobility in this respect is one of the biggest challenges facing Malaysia during the TMP period. The Government will ensure that there will be adequate urban-to-rural flow of capital and skills to provide for the employment needs of the rural population and check the rural-urban migration. Otherwise the nation will soon face the problems of widespread slums and pockets of poverty within its major cities and towns.

#### **Towards a self-reliant and resilient society**

297. A self-reliant and resilient society consists of communities of people who know their worth and constantly seek to prove it. The community as a group is able to identify and integrate its short and long-term needs, strive for the satisfaction of these needs with minimum assistance from the Government and deal with all forms of challenges as individuals and as a community. Thus, while Government assistance is necessary in promoting development and change within the community, such assistance given injudiciously may negate the above objectives. While assistance will be rendered to the poor and underprivileged to enable them to secure a fair share of the benefits of development, they must face full exposure to the challenges of life in order to become self-reliant and responsible members of society with a greater capacity for utilizing scarce resources and accumulating savings for development purposes. They need to find their own

identity, self-respect and self-fulfilment. Only such individuals can contribute to the formation of a self-reliant, resilient and progressive society. This issue is most relevant in respect of developing a core of entrepreneurs and businessmen among the Malays and other indigenous people in line with the objective of restructuring society. No enterprising and resourceful businessman can emerge without going through the competitive mill of the business world, learning to suffer from the consequences of any errors in decision-making and experiencing the anxiety of waiting for investments and efforts to pay off. Only then would he appreciate fully the meaning of profits and apply himself to the full in order to ensure that his undertaking obtains the highest returns.

298. In fostering the goal to create self-reliant progressive communities in Malaysia, especially in the rural areas, the Government will ensure that all programmes contribute to this objective. It becomes crucial that the help and assistance extended to the poor, the economic and job opportunities created to bring them into the mainstream of development and the resources and facilities laid at their disposal, be made accessible to, and taken full advantage of, by them. Steps will be taken to ensure that crucial input factors such as credit, high-productivity seed grains, fertilizers, processing and marketing facilities will reach the intended recipients and can be acquired with minimum effort.

299. It must be stressed, however, that accessibility is a reciprocal process. The Government will make its services and assistance available to the public on a national basis but it cannot deliver these services and assistance on a house-to-house basis. They have to be made obtainable through the various operating arms and agencies of Government and it will be the responsibility of those who need them to avail themselves of these services. They have to at least identify the kind of services and assistance needed, approach the proper authorities and make a formal presentation of their problems. A failure to make these moves would still render certain services and assistance inaccessible, although they are available for free and their scope has been extended. A self-reliant and resilient society is one that should be able to make the best use of the services and assistance offered in order to gain the maximum benefits.

300. This does not, of course, mitigate the responsibility of public officials to ensure that programmes and projects intended to benefit the poor and the least advantaged so as to improve their competitiveness in society, do reach them. Given the fact that those who are better endowed with material and non-material resources will always have an edge over the poor, only a concerted effort on the part of both the public officials and the poor to be mutually responsive to each other's needs and limitations can make a



success of the quest to overcome poverty, restructure society and enhance social mobility. Continuing studies will be made by the Government on the social aspects of development and plan implementation to help ensure that any rigidities in the social structure which tend to keep the poor and the disadvantaged in their present socio-economic status are removed. It is in regard to the improvement of the total social structure of society that the sociological aspects of development merge with its political dimension.

#### **IV. POLITICAL DIMENSION**

##### **Prerequisites for systems change**

301. Development and modernization bring with them a need for both social and political adaptation. The social system with its sets of norms, values and institutions governing the interaction of people within a society, tends to change very slowly. It is the political aspect of development which often triggers a faster rate of change, sometimes at a pace beyond a healthy rate of social evolution and reform. Once the change is set in motion, the political system itself may find difficulties in adjusting its structure to the needs of the new society.

302. Within the period of the SMP, some major changes have been made in the structure of Malaysia's political system. Most significant has been the expansion of the governmental base to enable the participation of major political parties in Malaysia, i.e. through the establishment of the *Barisan Nasional*. This has proved to be one of the manifestations of the beliefs in participative democracy.

303. The *Barisan Nasional* embodying political consensus among a wide cross section of political parties is a distinctive feature of the country's political environment. The *Barisan* is an alliance of political parties founded on the premise that open intemperate debate and party politics based on sectional interests could divert the energies of Malaysians from the tasks of nation-building. The development of the *Barisan* lent itself to the resolution of sensitive national issues within the structure of political consensus. What emerges is a perspective which considerably reduces the susceptibility of the country to open conflict between individuals and groups. In its short history, the *Barisan* has demonstrated its capacity for muting divisiveness within society.

304. The strategy for this has already been designed. A wider political base should now enable the Government to effect a wider social mobilization. For the first time in its history, Malaysia can look forward to a total mobilization of its people with undivided loyalty within a democratic framework in which political opposition will continue to exist. What is needed now is for this commitment to be translated into the integration of the people at the grassroots level. This will be the greatest challenge to national leaders for the next few years.

### **Framework for participation**

305. There is a rising expectation among the people, more need for interest articulation, greater demand for immediate Government response to their interests and a higher degree of impatience for the promised goods to be delivered. These will have to be balanced by an increase in the sense of responsibility towards the Government and the nation, thus requiring a new kind of relationship as examined in the following paragraphs.

306. Just as the political system must adjust itself to the current needs of the nation, the electorate and the public must also change their attitudes towards, and expectation of, Government assistance. While it is the Government's responsibility to provide a framework for development, acquire and allocate the necessary resources and monitor the entire process of development so that the goals of the nation will be achieved, it cannot offer a "good life" to all without appropriate involvement, endeavour and sacrifice on their part.

307. Involvement, of course, implies active participation in the processes of development. It means that the public has to take part in determining what needs to be done, how it should be done and be accountable for the consequences of its choice.

308. The public can only participate actively in decision-making if they are well organized at the community or village level. The Government has provided a structure for planning inputs at the village, district and State levels in the form of Development Committees operating at each level. It is most necessary, therefore, that these committees at the village level be used as operational committees providing direct inputs in terms of information feedback and expression of village interests and problems.

309. In the TMP period, the Government will endeavour to improve the functioning of the Village Development and Security Committees (VDSC) by ensuring that committee members appointed from the village are made more responsible for the implementation of the TMP. All members of the village will present their problems to the appropriate committee member to be taken up with the *Penghulu* or *Penggawa* individually or at the committee meetings. This will strengthen the role of the committee as a whole as a feedback mechanism.

310. Efforts will also be made in the TMP period to strengthen participative machinery for planning and decision-making in the New Villages along the above lines. Where no Village Development Committees have been set up, immediate action will be taken to establish them. Where a Local Council has existed, members of the Council will be made responsible for specific problem areas.

## V. SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

311. Other than its exploitation by propaganda, the communists have also attempted to muster support for their cause by enlisting those who are ideologically disposed towards them. The Government has designed several effective measures to counter and overcome the threat posed by the communists and anti-national elements. In this connection, certain important political developments have enabled the Government to provide a basic framework to strengthen national security and stability. The very fact that Malaysians have committed themselves to uphold the principles enshrined in the *Rukunegara*, together with the formation and strengthening of the *Barisan Nasional* have contributed to a greater national resolve and consensus among the people to meet this challenge to national security. An additional important source of strength is that Islam and other religions practised in the country continue to provide a strong bulwark against insidious communist propaganda. The youth in both the rural and urban areas of the country have an important role to play in this regard. In the endeavour of the Government to build upon their ideals and mobilize their energies in the course of nation-building, Malaysia will find in its youth a bastion against the threats of communist ideology. Above all, the focus of the NEP to bring about broad based socio-economic improvement through poverty eradication irrespective of race and restructuring provides a significant positive thrust to reinforce the efforts of the country's security forces to maintain the security and integrity of the nation.

312. In regard to dealing with militant communism, the Government will, in the TMP period, expand and strengthen its security forces considerably. Mopping up operations and surveillance will be intensified to ensure that all communist elements will be apprehended or annihilated.

313. The Government has intensified its efforts to meet the threat posed by the recurrence of militant communist activities in the country. The continuing and active participation of the people in development planning and implementation and the growing benefits accruing to them from development provide the assurance that the war against the enemies of the nation will remain a people's war.

314. Living in the remote rural areas, the *Orang Asli* are the most exposed to communist exploitation and propaganda. As they are increasingly brought into the mainstream of development and progress, they will constitute another strong force against the threats of militant communism.

315. To enable the people to pursue life and happiness with a general sense of safety is a fundamental responsibility of the Government. While this also hinges on the maintenance of national security, it falls more in the area of public safety against all forms of crime and threat to human well-being in the nation. Hence, the Government has increased the strength of the security forces and improved the living conditions of their personnel, especially those in the lower ranks, through better pay and housing. The Government has

also initiated the establishment of voluntary organizations such as the *Ikatan Relawan Rakyat* (RELA), the Vigilante Corps and the *Rukun Tetangga* to help the security forces in maintaining security and peace in the nation. These efforts will be intensified and expanded in the course of the TMP period commensurate with its development efforts. Again, full and active participation of the *rakyat* is the underlying theme. It is the Government's conviction that both the enhancement of development and progress and the maintenance of security and peace in the country are the shared responsibility of the *rakyat* and their elected leaders working in conjunction with other public officials. Thus, mutual co-operation and support will be the key determinant of success. This applies to the implementation of the TMP as a whole.

#### **Role of the public service**

316. The process of development must necessarily involve a high degree of political direction and judgement. While such involvement is appropriate at the policy-making level, where the political leaders are responsible, their implications at the level of policy implementation need to be examined. The process of development implementation, if subjected to the demands of pressure and interest-groups, will result in social justice and administrative rationality being sacrificed. All these will militate against the nation's efforts to achieve commonly shared goals.

317. For development implementation to be smoothly carried out, there must be less political pressure that could result in policy decisions made at the highest level being circumvented or flouted. Such pressure, while necessary for ensuring that policies are implemented, becomes counter-productive when applied to the managerial aspects of work in a way which undermines administrative neutrality and rationality. While administrators are expected to understand political needs and aspirations, they cannot be politically involved or biased in the implementation of development programmes and projects.

318. The satisfaction of current socio-economic demands of the nation, with the eradication of poverty, the restructuring of society and the maintenance of national security as the triple thrusts, requires considerable adroitness and subtlety on the part of the political leaders. It requires an effective monitoring of the public services to ensure that policies and goals are expeditiously pursued and achieved. How this may best be done within the huge matrix of national needs, priorities and programme or project requirements, will become a continuous subject of research and evaluation in the TMP period.

### **Optimization of benefits**

319. The triple goals of eradication of poverty, restructuring society and maintenance of national security have their own sets of targets and objectives. Their overall inter-relationships and the various targets and objectives, necessitate an effective strategy for resource allocation. Chapter IV has already indicated the nature of resource allocation at the macro-economic level.

320. In the best interests of the nation, the Government will ensure that all Ministries and Agencies, in working out the details of their programmes for implementation, will optimize the inter-relationship of goals to obtain maximum benefits. Thus, measures directed at ensuring national security will, as much as possible, also include measures to eradicate poverty and restructuring society and vice versa. The inter-relationship and interdependence of all programmes and projects will be closely examined to ensure that the "spillover" effects of each of them can be maximized. This will form part of the criteria for the choice of alternative measures in the implementation of the Plan so that the value of each dollar spent by the nation will be stretched to the maximum.

321. All the above points to the need for continuing in-depth assessment of the political and administrative machinery for evaluating national progress and modernization itself. If, for political reasons, the physical and economic aspects of development alone have to be emphasized, the human aspects of development will certainly lag behind. The human and social aspects of development are more intangible, more difficult to quantify and measure and take a longer period to show results. Yet these are the ultimate ends of development and nation-building *viz.* the creation of a strong and self-reliant society able to meet all the challenges of a competitive world. This is fully recognized by the Government and the TMP will emphasize the social and human aspects of development over and above that of purely economic gains.

## **VI. IMAGE OF THE FUTURE**

322. The previous Chapters in the Plan have indicated the macro and sectoral goals to which the nation will be committed. In concluding this Chapter, it is important that the ultimate socio-economic goals of the nation be summarized in terms of the desirable future state that Malaysia is set to achieve. Such a state would represent a vision of the future that the nation will pursue through the TMP and beyond.

323. Firstly, the goals of ensuring national security, eradicating poverty and restructuring society point to a state of being where Malaysians can enjoy peace, prosperity and racial harmony. Peace will be interpreted in terms of being free from internal and external aggression or threat, harmony of interest at the political, social and cultural levels and a degree of

stability that is conducive to the process of change and development. Prosperity will be viewed in terms of the absence of abject poverty, starvation, malnutrition and very poor health. Of basic significance will be the attainment of an acceptable minimum level of income and an adequate standard of living for all in the nation. When this prevails, poverty would have been eradicated and prosperity realized.

324. National unity and racial harmony are indeed the ideals of all nations which have a multiracial population. Racial conflicts and enmity which exist even in the rich industrial nations show that economic prosperity alone does not necessarily ensure the achievement of such unity and harmony. It requires a high degree of mutual tolerance among the various races, respect for each other's culture and religion, the integration of basic norms and values in regard to the nation and its identity and the establishment of and a commitment to a common set of goals and aspirations that transcend communal interests. These form the conditions that the Malaysian society will attempt to satisfy in order to achieve racial harmony. The achievement of peace and prosperity as discussed will certainly help to accelerate the process.

325. Secondly, the achievement of a peaceful, prosperous and harmonious multiracial society cannot depend on the efforts of the Government alone. It can only be the result of a full commitment by the people of the nation to the triple goals of establishing national security, the eradication of poverty and restructuring society. The Government can only provide the public policy framework and the infrastructural facilities. It is the people that must achieve. Thus, what is sought is a society that is oriented towards performance and achievement, a society that is both motivated and committed to the goals of the nation and not preoccupied with communal interests. Nor must such a society be too dependent on the Government for help and direction but rather provide the Government with the necessary mandate to ensure the achievement of peace, prosperity and racial harmony in the nation.

326. Thirdly, the delicate processes involved in achieving the three major goals of the nation reflect some qualities which must be inherent in the society itself before such achievement can be possible. These include the capability of adjusting itself to new and unexpected demands without causing racial tension, the possession of a will to remain together as a nation under trying moments of political and economic crises, the belief in a common destiny for the future and the conviction that the multiracial nature of the Malaysian society provides the country with a unique combination of human resources for rapid development. These qualities are already there but the future Malaysian society must possess them in stronger measure.

327. Fourthly, for an integrated, strong and well-disciplined Malaysian society to evolve, material development within society must be balanced by a strengthening of the society's moral and spiritual fibre. While the Government will provide the overall leadership and direction in this respect, the responsibilities fall squarely on the parents and the youth of the nation. The nature of socialization within families will, to a great extent, determine the personality of the young. Irresponsible parents who allow their young to be exposed to the taking of drugs and alcohol, involvement in secret societies, gangsterism and indulgence in crime or vice in general, will constitute a threat to their families, community in which they live and the nation. It will be their responsibility to prevent such occurrence as much as it is the Government's to take drastic remedial action if they did. While the education and legal authorities will be responsible for the latter, only parents can ensure that their young grow up into responsible and self-disciplined individuals.

328. Fifthly, the role of women in society has become an increasingly important factor in both the developed and developing countries. The active participation and contribution of women in development outside the family circle are no longer saddled by prejudice and traditional conservatism. This is manifest by their leadership potentials in the fight for individual rights and freedom in society, equal treatment and respect for individuals irrespective of sex, race, culture and religion and the acceptance of human individual worth and capability in all walks of life. These are significant factors in a nation's search for character and identity. The contribution of women to the evolution of a strong and self-reliant society in Malaysia needs to be appreciated and taken into consideration in the agenda for rapid development and progress.

329. The future Malaysian society must uphold the principles of *Rukunegara* as an operational ideology. Underlying the five principles laid down is the need to hold social and economic justice as the single most important ideal of the nation. Only a well developed and a strong commitment to the ideal of social and economic justice can prevent healthy competition among Malaysia's racial groups from degenerating into unhealthy exploitation of the weak by the strong and of the poor by the rich. Socio-economic justice is Malaysia's greatest safeguard against the forces of human greed and rapaciousness in today's society. It lies at the root of the Government's efforts to promote socio-economic development. Hence, all forms of aberrations that negate the goal of establishing social and economic justice, such as indulgence in corrupt and unfair practices, need to be eliminated in the interest of achieving a just society as conceived by the *Rukunegara*.

330. Finally, the single ultimate end of all that the nation desires to achieve during the TMP period and beyond is the improvement and upliftment of the well-being of all Malaysians. Well-being in this respect is viewed in terms of the ability of all citizens to lead a meaningful life with ample opportunities

to achieve self-fulfilment and the realization of inner hopes and desires. All Malaysians should be able to live a full life in a multiracial community where every member respects the rights of others and in doing so earns self respect. It should be a multiracial community based on mutual respect, trust and confidence, with a pattern of interaction that allows for mutual relationships transcending communal or racial lines. It is a community in which each Malaysian should be proud of being first and foremost a Malaysian and is prepared to defend that pride.

331. In conclusion, the future of Malaysia and its people is also tied up inextricably to the attainment of peace and harmony in the Southeast Asian region as a whole. The nation will therefore give its full support to the promotion of regional understanding and co-operation so that Malaysia can achieve all its ideals and also contribute to regional development and resilience.