

## **BERSIH 2.0 New Year Message**

### **2021: A Year For A More Democratic and Stable Malaysia**

The year 2020 has left us with many new challenges and experiences for Malaysia. The world and Malaysia seem to have leap-frogged to 2021 through the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the nature of politics has not changed much.

The pursuit of power and influence still continues and justifies the saying that politics never sleeps. This has been exemplified by many incidents, starting with the Sheraton Moves that led to the fall of the federal government and six state governments because of party/coalition hopping, to the crisis amongst the opposition in their attempts to reclaim the seat of federal power through a de facto vote of no confidence over the 2021 budget.

Bearing in mind the vagaries of human nature and its quest for power, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (BERSIH2.0) continues to fight for a more democratic and stable political system for the country. Within the framework of a parliamentary democracy grounded on constitutional monarchy, we need to understand that each component has its own role.

In this system, all parties should be given greater freedom and stronger incentives to compete maturely so that the political rivalry in our country is based on policies and professionalism rather than just crude power struggles between ambitious politicians.

Therefore, realizing that the country's political situation needs to be stabilized with healthy political practices, in June 2020, BERSIH 2.0 with the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM) and Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM) issued a joint statement calling for a multi-party agreement between political parties with six points including parliamentary reform and equal constituency development funds (CDF). These later became the basis of the deliberations on Confidence and Supply Agreement (CSA).

This call for reform materialised in Perak with the appointment of the new Perak Menteri Besar Saarani Mohamad, who announced CDF of RM200,000 to each state assemblyperson, tentative appointment of an opposition chair for the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and promised appointment of all State Assemblypersons including opposition members to various committees at the district level. On December 6, the Menteri Besar of Johor also declared an increase in CDF allocations, up to RM150,000 for all Johor state assemblypersons regardless of party affiliation. The Perlis state government has also promised to provide fair allocations to all elected representatives, including the opposition.

To create a healthier political environment, BERSIH 2.0 urges the following reforms to be implemented:

1. Equitable CDF allocation to all elected representatives regardless of party affiliation, at both federal and state level besides Perak.

2. Parliamentary/legislative reform so that MPs/state assemblypersons in the opposition bench and government backbench can play a more meaningful role, such as inclusion in at least one parliamentary select committee (PSC), allocation of time for non-governmental affairs like private members bills and consultative and multipartisan setting of parliamentary/legislative agenda.

3. Recognition of a shadow cabinet by federal and state governments through the provision of allowances and emoluments and reasonable access to government information to formulate alternative policies.

4. Introduction of a recall election mechanism at the federal and state level to empower people to determine the mandate of a MP/ADUN who has hopped to another political party which is different from the one he/she represented during election.

5. Equality before the law. Selective prosecution and immunity from prosecution by law that produces a dual-class society must end. We propose to establish a politically independent Public Prosecutor's Office and separated from the Attorney General's Chambers.

6. A more rational, appropriate and meaningful division of power between the federal government, state government and local government to ensure not all the power is concentrated in the federal government and thus, all levels of government can play an important role with adequate resources. In line with this, elections should be held for local governments.

7. Introduction of Party List (List-PR) seats that are elected with direct mandate to parties and remain with the parties even if the elected representatives switch parties, alongside the seats under the existing First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system at both the federal and state levels.

BERSIH 2.0 and all democracy-loving Malaysians hope to see their political leaders and parties show their maturity and put the people's interest above all. This can be done sincerely and honestly by continuously working towards institutional reforms in order to bring our country through the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic for years to come. Let us continue to work for a cleaner, fairer and more prosperous Malaysia.

**Released by,**

**Steering Committee of BERSIH 2.0**

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