

Event: Til Eleven Morning Insights: The New Parliament, New Culture, New Code of Conduct, The Reforms

Date: 25 April 2019 (Thursday)

Time: 9am – 11am

Venue: Bilik Taklimat, Dewan Rakyat, Parliament Malaysia

Organiser: Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI)

Invited Guest: Dato' Mohamad Ariff MD Yusof, Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat

Background

This event was organised by Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI). The purpose of this event was to have conversations with Dato' Mohamad Ariff MD Yusof, Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat on the parliamentary reforms of the government. Tan Sri Dato' Dr Ramon V. Navaratnam, Board Member of ASLI and Chairperson of the Centre of Policy Studies at ASLI had given opening speech to welcome the attendance of the guests.

Speech by Tan Sri Dato' Dr Ramon V. Navaratnam

He complimented the new parliament system has took the initiative to engage with the public and he viewed this initiative is an important milestone for the country to achieve meaningful democracy. Besides, he also expressed his wish for the government to bring back the good conduct in parliament. He suggested the government to develop a “good conduct” index to evaluate the behaviours of the Members of Parliaments during the parliament sessions to ensure that all the MPs will set good examples to the people in Malaysia.

Besides emphasis on the good conduct of the MPs in the parliament, Tan Sri Dato' Dr Ramon V. Navaratnam has also suggested the government to bring back the local government election so that all the people in Malaysia will have a say to improve the country. In addition, he also calls for the government to establish select committees to discuss on various issues, such as economics, gender equality and etc. to ensure the policies are holistic and also to reduce the chances of flip flop decisions by the government.

He acknowledged that changes in the reform system is necessary to improve in any other countries but the mentality or mind set of the people need to align with the reforms. Before he ended his speech, Tan Sri Dato' Dr Ramon V. Navaratnam acknowledged the parliamentary

reforms does takes time and he also expressed positive views on the government ability to manage the reforms.

Speech by Dato' Mohamad Ariff MD Yusof

After the opening speech, the host invited Dato' Mohamad Ariff MD Yusof, Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat to share the progress of the parliamentary reforms in Malaysia. Dato' Mohamad Ariff MD Yusof acknowledged that parliamentary reforms are challenging and time consuming, but it is necessary to improve the country. He started the sharing session by sharing the history of parliament in Malaysia before and after The Independence. He also noted that there is a need to strengthen the parliament system and he complimented this event is timely to reflect on the milestone of parliamentary reforms in conjunction with the 60th of parliamentary democracy in Malaysia.

Dato' Mohamad Ariff MD Yusof also acknowledged the audience that the government has initiated a Second Chamber to discuss on the local issues that majority of the public might not be aware of. Besides, he also emphasized the importance of good conduct in the parliament. He stated that the negative parliamentary language, such as racist and sexist remarks by the MPs in Malaysia will induce negative images to the country and also internationally. Therefore, he insisted that there is a need to make sure the parliamentary reforms must in-lined with the standard of conducts of the policy makers to dignify the function of the parliament.

Besides, Dato' Mohamad Ariff MD Yusof has acknowledged the audience that the government is fulfilling their promises progressively. For the parliamentary reforms, he stated that Commonwealth Parliamentary Associations (CPA) has been adopted as guideline and checklist for the code of conducts in the parliament. The Speaker of Dewan Rakyat also stated that the government realising the 'Janji #16' of the Pakatan Harapan manifesto which is to restore the dignity and integrity of the government. Initiative such as the tailor of White Paper to stimulate discussion has been adopted is in-lined with the manifesto of the government. He also briefly informed the audience that the Dewan Negara will be strengthen to provide check and balance to the Dewan Rakyat.

He also agreed with Tan Sri Dato' Dr Ramon V. Navaratnam that the change of mind set of the people is necessary to in-lined with the parliamentary reforms and also to ensure a healthy political culture and good conducts in the parliament. Dato' Mohamad Ariff MD Yusof has listed six parliamentary special select committees. He stated that the establishment of Parliamentary Special Committees is accordance with the parliamentary practice in other countries and recommended benchmarks for democracy legislations of CPA. It is also done in line with the 'Janji #16', which is to restore the integrity of Parliament in the Buku Harapan.

The government will also institutionalise the Select Committee system in both Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara, complete with suitable provisions and appropriate support staff to enable them to function effectively. Temporary Committees can also be created for ad hoc matters. A Dewan Rakyat Select Committee will also be established to monitor every Ministry, with the power to call Ministers and senior officials to testify. The 6 Special Select Committees are as below:

1. Special Select Committee for Consideration of Bills
2. Special Select Committee for Consideration on Budget
3. Special Select Committee for Consideration on Defence and Home Affairs
4. Special Select Committee for Consideration on Rights and Gender Equality
5. Special Select Committee for Consideration on Federal State Relations
6. Special Select Committee for Consideration on Major Public Appointment

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Appendix

