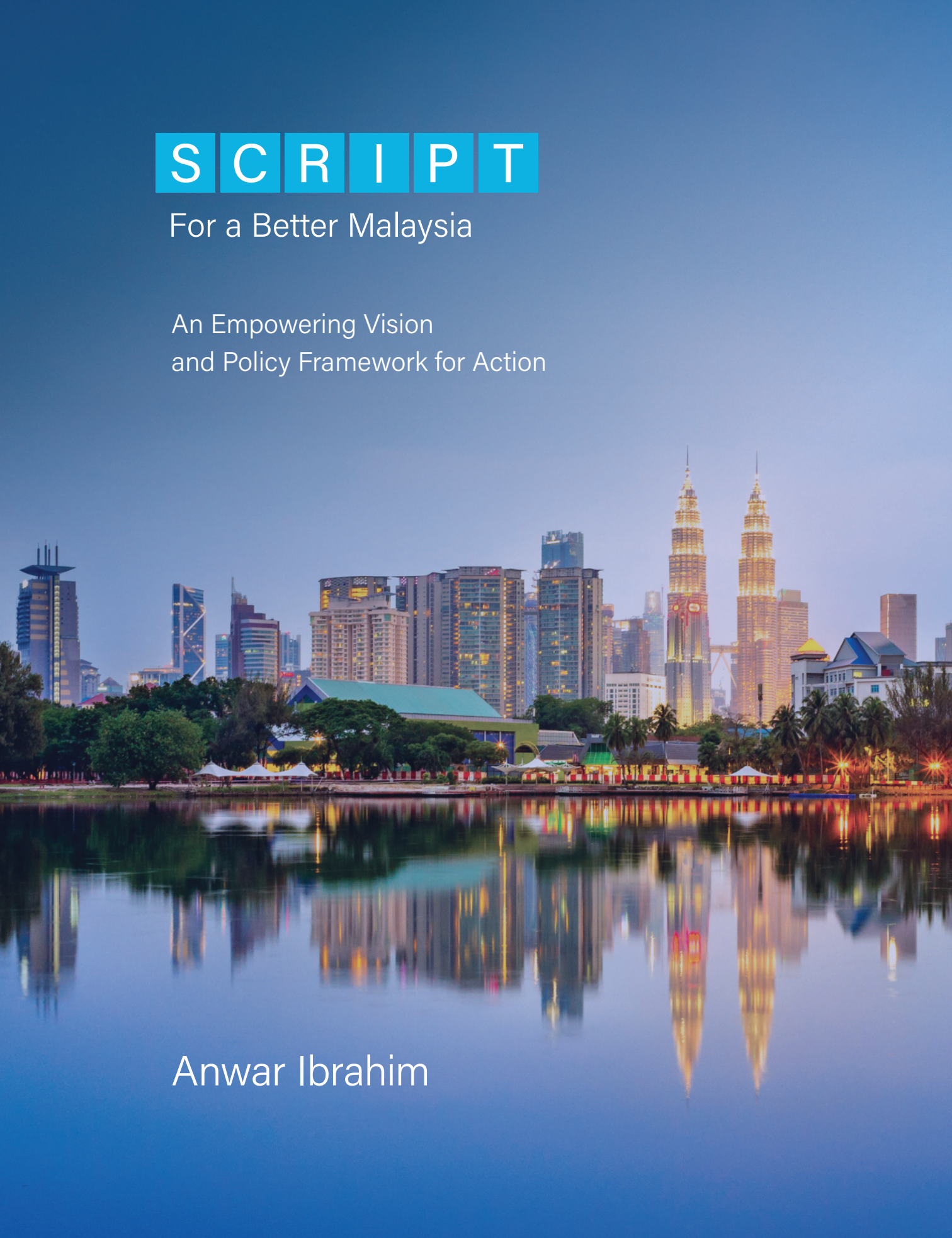


# SCRIPT

For a Better Malaysia

An Empowering Vision  
and Policy Framework for Action

Anwar Ibrahim





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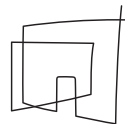
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Shah Alam, Selangor



“ The best of your rulers are those  
whom you love  
and  
who love you,  
who invoke God’s blessings upon you  
and  
you invoke His blessings upon them. ”

Prophet Muhammad (Muslim)



**Script /skript/** noun. 1. handwriting as distinct from print; written characters. 2. type imitating handwriting. 3. an alphabet or system of writing. 4. the test of a play, film or broadcast. 5. an examinee's set of written answers. 6. Law. an original document as distinct from a copy. 7. Psychology. the social role or behaviour appropriate to particular situations that a person absorbs through cultural influences and association with others. **8. a wholistic vision and policy framework for a viable, dynamic and inclusive Malaysian future.**

# Introduction

We have struggled together through a difficult couple of decades. Rising each morning, we give our greatest effort to improve ourselves, our families, and our society. The last couple years have made this reality even more apparent. All our individual efforts have collectively made Malaysia the great nation it is today. Yet, sadly, a cloud of disenchantment hangs over this great work. And I take to heart your growing cynicism and loss of faith in politicians and, more tragically, in each other. However, we must not forget that your sacrifice, your perseverance, and your spirit to carry on, when everything was against you, has delivered us through a global pandemic marred in concurrent political and economic crises. Progress is a running river, and we must not let it run stagnate. We have arrived at a moment in history where we, unified in our vast diversity and respectful of our differences, must reflect on how we can make our nation more prosperous, how we can fight the scourge of corruption and inequality, how we can fulfil the aspirations of our youth – setting them up for greater successes than our own and to dream bigger dreams than we can even begin to imagine – and how we can shape a more viable future for our nation.

It is time to stand above doing what is 'just enough.' From passively accepting the notion that 'things change,' we now need to enthusiastically 'change things.' We must not forget that we begin from a position of strength. We are a nation that has embodied all the glory of being a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy. We are a multicultural society with a rich history and heritage. Our diversity is one of our major strengths. But to move towards a prosperous future, we must come together as a harmonious people, working together, growing stronger together. Each and every one of us must reflect on what can be done for all of us. Together we can renew our social contract, cast out the fear and distrust that has impeded our progress through transparency and good governance. We must move from the perception that we are a nation of listeners and followers to embody our identity as a community of active participants, taking control of our own futures so that our children may be better off than us and perhaps leave this world even better

than they found it. In our collective responsibility, in the spirit of Reformasi, we can turn the tide and seek the equality, justice, and prosperity for which we all thirst.

The history of Malaysia as a history of empty promises ends here. You deserve better than 'just wait and see' or the faithless 'trust us.' For decades, government after government have proposed reform and change, draining the meaning from these words. Even the word 'new' has been debased – more of the old is not new! You cannot rightly call it a 'new normal' if it is just more of the same, no lessons learned, no improvements made. Mismanagement, corruption, cronyism and political battles, divisions, and squabbling have taken their toll on our nation. Urgent issues, such as Malay poverty, environmental degradation, community cohesion, nation building, and a declining economy have been sacrificed to boost the coffers of selected elites and the nation's wealth has been amassed by a handful of individuals. The demands of the poor and the trepidations of concerned citizens have fallen on deaf ears. Fear and suspicion between communities have escalated. We have lost ground not just in equality but also in health and education and deteriorated economically. Internationally, Malaysia is now at risk of being perceived as a fragmented, corrupt, insignificant, and even a racist country, when not the butt of global embarrassment. There is an urgent need for Malaysia to embrace transparent and accountable governance. We need to rebuild a caring and compassionate Malaysia as a sustainable society in which many different communities come together and thrive. Malaysians live in a web of social relations infused with norms and values that come from different religious and ethnic backgrounds bound on the basis of intrinsic, historical cooperation. Through collective action and cooperation, we can build a fair Malaysia united towards action and positive change. The powers that be have attempted to shroud this reality, preferring a doctored version of history. We need to develop a new shared idea of community that is not based on a simple return to the past, or anchored to any one ideology, but grounded on a reciprocated respect and an inclusive, shared future vision of Malaysia. Malaysian democracy ought to be based on deliberation involving all its citizens in a reiterative dialogue. We should lead through knowledge, initiative, and innovation, and engage with each other with respect to promote the progressive ideals of justice, equality, and balance. We should shape our collective futures through a shared history built on trust and inclusivity that utilizes cooperative anticipation and foresight.

“ We can operate on the notion of “things change”; or we can actively “change things”. Where the things-change syndrome prompts a succession of short-range steps made in reaction to changes in the environment, the long-range framework to “change things” requires thinking consciously and acting rationally, by continuous and systematic thinking, by operating with well-defined values and norms, by perusing goals that have the consensus’ of the people. ”


Anwar Ibrahim, 'From Things Change to Change Things,' p21

However, these goals cannot be achieved by conventional means. That is because the world we now live in has changed drastically. Accelerating change has become the norm. We are more interconnected than ever; social media and messaging platforms transfer information to millions instantly, in every part of the globe, touching each individual. Closed social circles can receive entirely different, often false, information instantaneously. Rampant contradictions, often expressed as opposing ideological positions and civic differences as well as open conflicts, have eroded trust in politics and politicians. Established, cherished ideals, ideas, and notions can be overturned overnight – ‘truth’ itself is now under the hammer of ‘post-truth’ slogans. Even scientific evidence, as in the case of climate change, can be dismissed as irrelevant. Drones, robots, artificial intelligence, 3D printing, and genetic engineering are transforming the planet. The world has become more complex, where every problem is connected to every other problem and there are no ready-made, simple solutions. We are engulfed in crisis upon crisis, often appearing simultaneously, taking us ever closer to the edge of chaos. The accelerating, globalised, networked world, steeped in contradictions, complexity, and chaos, has ushered in what has been appropriately described as ‘postnormal times.’ The effects of climate change had hinted at this for a long time – as we now see the secondary and tertiary effects of this pending catastrophe play out in real-time. The collective trauma and disruption we faced due to the Covid-19 pandemic confirmed our postnormal reality.

Conventional approaches to problem solving or policy making do not work in postnormal times. Indeed, much of what we think of as normal, and have taken for granted, up to now, cannot cope with the interconnected complex web of problems we now face. Orthodox economics, going back to Adam Smith, is constantly and increasingly being exposed for its false assumptions. Many progressive economists now see the economy as a complex adaptive system in which aggregate behaviour emerges from the interaction of its plethora of components and composite feedback with inescapable 'unforeseen consequences' of the actions of individuals, business organisations, and governments – and, of course, the things we are not even thinking about, like seemingly insignificant, microscopic viruses. The traditional modes of planning and policymaking are now insufficient. The emergence of Big Data has changed the landscape of forecasting and planning. Complexity enhances ignorance, which is often overlooked and largely misunderstood. Uncertainty is the one remaining thing that can be counted on. A reality now recognised and embraced by the World Bank, a founding member of the 'Society for Decision Making Under Deep Uncertainty.' For over two years you have watched as our own government and ministries have been brought to their knees, confounded by postnormal times. You, who have suffered the historically destructive floods, from north to south, that have plagued our nation for the past couple years, know this is not God's will. It is the result of unreflective, selfish actions taken by ignorant individuals with no regard for their impact on the rest of us or on future generations of Malaysians.

That is why we need a policy framework based on alertness to postnormal times, an appreciation that most of our problems are interconnected and require simultaneous efforts on a number of different fronts and sectors – a society wide endeavour – and an awareness of futures needs and challenges. We need to prepare ourselves and learn to operate in the new postnormal world.

In the past, when searching for a starting point for new directions, ideas, or even a politically convenient slogan, our leaders look outside. Past governments have sometimes looked east to Japan and China, sometimes to the west, pining over all that is European or American – as if these nations had figured it all out. Our national leaders have idolised the values, cultural norms, and successes of others, inferring that a look within our own rich Malaysian culture and history for the foundations of success would be a futile endeavour. This is our first point of departure. This is not to disparage the cultures and ideas of other nations, quite the contrary, as the basis of this policy relies on plural appreciation for all ideas. But we begin where no government in our sixty-five years since independence has, by looking into what it is that makes us Malaysian. In our vibrant multicultural society, this is a task easier



“ The key to progress and prosperity lies not in satisfaction with what we have already achieved but in a firm determination to make even greater efforts in the future. ”

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, *First Malaysia Plan*, 1965

stated than carried out, but no less critical and no less of value in advancing our country and actualising our suppressed potential. The policy Malaysia needs now must critique the conventions that have kept us spinning our wheels in the mud, focus our viewpoint on the postnormal reality of our contemporary world, and also retain and enhance our shared Malaysian values.

“ Welcome to postnormal times. It’s a time when little out there can be trusted or gives us confidence. The *espíritu del tiempo*, the spirit of our age, is characterised by uncertainty, rapid change, realignment of power, upheaval and chaotic behaviour. We live in an in-between period where old orthodoxies are dying, new ones have yet to be born, and very few things seem to make sense. ”

Ziauddin Sardar, ‘Welcome to Postnormal Times’

This is precisely what the SCRIPT Policy Framework is designed to do.

Our focus is on Sustainability, Care and Compassion, Respect, Innovation, Prosperity, and Trust – the main drivers of SCRIPT. Empowerment begins with reclaiming the power to define: we need to define the terms of our goals and visions in our own (Malaysian) ways. Our starting point is the definitions of our basic terms; and a simple statement of the goal or vision we seek through the application of each term.

The concept of sustainability has gone through many permutations and transformations. Originally defined as the necessity ‘to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,’ it has often been combined with development and turned into a positive modifier for the concepts of perpetual growth and uncontrolled expansion. The future dimension has been frequently overlooked. But by definition, sustainability is a future oriented practice. Without an accent on the future, nothing can be considered as sustainable. This is why the notion of ‘sustainable development’ has come under severe criticism; and, recently, there has been a shift towards ‘sustainable futures,’ which is seen as a more neutral and future-oriented concept. Now, sustainability, of course, seeks to

'sustain' But the key question is what are we seeking to sustain? Of course, we seek a sustainable ecology and environment for Malaysia. Our rich natural resources, flora and fauna, need to be protected, which means our economic policies and goals have to be in conformity with the goals of sustainable futures. But we need to go further. We also seek sustainability for our communities, urban conurbations and rural regions, the diversity of our cultures, our rich heritage, our democracy as well as the economic and psychological wellbeing of individuals. We need to see sustainability as a holistic, interconnected notion that touches every aspect of our nation and daily life.

“ The disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and the powerful and... neglect personas of poor and mean condition... is the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments. ”

*Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, p73*

Hence the emphasis on care and compassion. We seek a sustainable society where we care for, and feel the pain of the poor, the marginalised, and hitherto neglected communities and members of our society. It is mandatory for us to ensure that they have a liveable income to pursue a sustainable lifestyle. Care for the environment, employees, and the public has to be integrated in business practices, and our institutions have to facilitate the administration of compassion. A legal framework has to be developed to ensure care and compassion becomes an essential feature of our daily lives.

The poor in our society suffer not just from economic hardship. They are ignored, misguided, mocked, and squeezed of their dignity – all of which make the consequences of grinding poverty even harder to bear. Attempts to quantify the suffering of the poor are futile, and in lieu of a solution, the power to define and compartmentalise the less off in our society has been used in masking the problem in hope that it might disappear. The plight of the rural poor was first highlighted by the late Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz, the distinguished economist and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya, as far back as the late 1950s. And their situation has not improved at the rate one would minimally expect in relation to Malaysia's development during the intervening years.

“ Diversity is a superpower. Every study on the efficacy of thought, the creative process, the ability to learn, even the longevity of a healthy brain has shown that diversity is key. ”

*Wired* May/June 2019, p30



The Malaysian middle class are also faced with a precarious situation. The so-called middle class – the engine that drives our nation's economic growth – is an increasingly fluid category. Those on the lower end are sliding back into a cycle of grinding poverty while those on the upper end are barely meeting the minimum requirements for what was conventionally called 'middle class'. A robust middle class should not only be able to pay their bills but ought to be able to prosper, be allowed the comfort of security and trust in their institutions. To sleep soundly at night in the knowledge their government is doing all in their power to keep them safe and will be there to help them when hard times inevitably come. Our people are our primary resource; the seeds of our economic growth. That is why respect has to be high on our agenda. Respect requires that everyone in our society, whatever their background, is treated with dignity and is free from all types of harassment – not least the persecution of corrupt segments of society. As Professor Syed Hussein Alatas, a pioneering thinker of the sociology of corruption, has pointed out, corruption has entered the Malaysian society to such an extent that it has become 'horridly oppressive.'

We need to learn to respect integrity, honesty, and fair dealings. We need to respect all others, their communities, their beliefs, and their ways of life. We need the media, including social and digital media, to respect truth, fairness, and privacy and be free of bias, prejudice, and political interference. We must show respect to our spouses and our families, employees, and public servants. And we also need to give respect to ourselves, behave in a dignified manner, and to our own bodies, take care of our health and mental wellbeing. This requires us to recultivate a culture of respect, which has always been a cornerstone of Malaysian society. But we ought also to shape a politics of respect, which requires not just respect for our democracy – free, fair, and corruption-free elections within political parties and across the nation – but also a transparent, accountable government that listens to the citizens and pays heed to the needs and demands of the nation, that learns from its mistakes and does all in its power to serve out its duties.

The web of urgent problems we face – from fostering environmental sustainability to creating a 21st century system of governance, from Malay poverty to student loans, from the plight of the farmer to FELDA settlers' debts, from promoting equality and respect to restoring independence to institutions, from the reform of the healthcare system to improving the standards of education, from taking on a true recovery from the recent pandemic to regaining our footing in the slew of problems behind the price of goods, inflation, and cost of living, from navigating the effects of regional and global conflict and disruptions to playing an active role in the complex

world we are a part of – all require a strong and sustainable economy. This in turn compels us to nurture an innovative and entrepreneurial culture.

We need to go beyond our implicit premises, mental constructions, and perceptual boundaries that limit our capacity for critical thinking, appropriately diagnosing problems, developing innovative solutions, and discovering and embracing emerging opportunities. All productive sectors of the economy will have to adopt innovation and radical change in order to embrace the suitable and relevant features of Industry 4.0, Agriculture 4.0, and the wave of other unseen transformations on the horizon. The future will irrevocably change the job market, not least with automation, robots, Big Data and advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, and countless other emerging digital technologies beyond our imagination. We must adequately prepare for the changing landscape of work where many existing occupations and professions will be replaced by new and emerging ones. We have watched as even our conception of the workspace has changed with Work from Home and the increased use of digital meeting spaces. We need to also anticipate how the gig economy may transform and prepare the government for these emerging changes to avoid causing future shock and economic hardship for our people. We need to prepare our next generation for a challenging job market where creativity and innovation will be heavily in demand. The Digital Native Agenda (DNA23) initiative gives us a starting point for expanding our knowledge of the technologies to come. Undertakings like DNA23 helps us foresee the potential disruptions of the digital economy so we can prepare for the losses that could result from the rise of artificial intelligence and automation in industry. We can navigate Malaysia through the transition that will take place through foresight and preparation, minimising losses while capitalising on the opportunity for growth offered by the digital age. No one needs to be left behind or forgotten.

“ The cause of Malay poverty could be attributed to four factors: low productivity, exploitation and victimisation, neglect, and the urban-biased policies of the government. ”

Ungku Abdul Aziz, *Jejak-jejak di Pantai Zaman*

We cannot afford to mismanage the future with the myopic, conformist, uncritical, and mechanistic ways responsible for the blunders of the past. Thus, our educational system too must undergo innovative reforms. The complex, interconnected problems of postnormal times require interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary perspectives and practices. Currently the disciplinary structures of our universities impede rather than facilitate multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary research. We need to create 'departments without walls' in our universities and transcend the existing disciplinary silos that inhibit interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry. In postnormal times, students have to be able to work, think, and communicate across disciplines with interdisciplinary perspectives. Our youth have to not only be ready for Industry 4.0 and Agriculture 4.0 but what comes after that, and how they will continue to play their part in anticipating the ups and downs of our future economy. As such, universities must develop more effective linkages with industry, agriculture, manufacturing, and businesses as well as social and cultural institutions of society. Top-down teaching should be replaced with participatory and collaborative teaching and learning with emphasis on sustainability, futures literacy, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and adaptability, and social and cultural awareness. How they learn is equally as important as what we teach our students and appreciating what they remain ignorant to can be more important than what they think they know. This is not a simple curriculum review that we need, but a societal, cultural shift.

Much like sustainability, prosperity means different things to different people. Conventionally, it is associated with financial success, good fortune, and consumerism, the ideology of individual choice, of personal prerogative to get and to spend. We have distributed access to consumerism more widely but failed to construct a sustainable and distributive vision of prosperity. One consequence of rampant consumerism has been to breed insecurity and proliferate a sense of powerlessness. Social worth has come to be evaluated through conspicuous display of what we own. The result, so evident, is a continuous increase in inequality. We need a more meaningful notion of prosperity that is based not on materialistic choice and consumerism but on a more holistic idea of wellbeing. Prosperity based on ethical satisfaction is embedded in community rather than a perpetual quest for more material goods. It couples individual concerns with social responsibilities; a condition that includes obligations and responsibilities to others, indeed to the whole of the natural as well as the social world. Thus, prosperity must include the notion of sustainability, as well as care and compassion for others, and respect for individuals, communities, institutions, and the environment. Prosperity ought to be a function of belonging, being anchored in a matrix of

communities, traditions, histories, and values; and that defines progress in terms of symbiosis. A tree does not grow continuously; it reaches a natural position from which it provides sustenance to the rest of its environment. It is this unchanging part of the equation, the source of our identity and sacredness, which is the secret to prosperity. The journey towards such a holistic notion of prosperity must begin with the realisation that neoliberal economy has failed to tackle inequality and social inclusion. Indeed, it is now widely recognised that capitalism itself is crumbling and it is part of the problem rather than an aspect of the solution. Neoliberal policies have led to excessive market deregulation, unwarranted tax cuts, fiscal austerity, rampant disparity, and economic dislocation. We need to see the economy as a complex system, with a string of interconnected and interdependent elements. Like a garden, it is seldom in perfect balance: it is always growing and shrinking simultaneously. And just like a garden, if left unattended, entirely to itself, it can lead to detrimental imbalances – even chaos! Thus, economies require judgements: what kind of growth is good, what kind is harmful to society, what kind will enhance inclusivity, and what kind is sustainable, and, also, what kind will destroy the environment.

“ In a corrupt society, corruption enters into our lives at frequent intervals and at several intersections. The child is already exposed to its damaging effects while in primary school. Corruption becomes part of the visible scenery. An entire generation of children growing up in its shadow. What this would do to the personality of the individual is certainly something to worry about. ”

*Syed Hussein Alatas, The Problem of Corruption, p81*

What this means is that there is an urgent necessity for us to move towards an economy anchored in sustainability, care and compassion, respect, and innovation; or, what is being described in certain circles of academic economists as, 'economics for inclusive prosperity.' It takes us beyond simple concerns of market fundamentalism and monetarism to consideration of poverty eradication, wellbeing, social inclusivity, equality, climate change, and environmental and community

sustainability. It emphasises that governments should provide public goods and social insurance to correct the problems of society and shift technological change towards desirable futures. It critically embraces radical change while creating a financial system that promotes equitable and inclusive growth as well as fair taxation and risk sharing ecosystem. It aims to prevent monopolies that extract rent from society and directs all progress towards minimising the losses of workers. A recalibration must occur where all members of the society and the economy are recognised for their vital role in our system and asked to respect each other to fix past ills and obtain a higher harmony amongst all Malaysians. Our economic framework must balance the mathematics of growth with the morality of human dignity, regardless of social standing. This is the framework for a humane economics. Humane economics embraces renewable sources of energy and incentivises businesses and cooperation to support the prosperity of citizens, communities, and the society as a whole.

Our transformative vision for Malaysia may appear to some as utopian in its outlook. But SCRIPT is neither a philosophical dream or an unrealistic ideal. It is a recognition that business-as-usual cannot continue. Moreover, it is a system of guidance, a torch in a dark place. And for us to take that first step – for these words to move from this page into the preferred futures we seek – one crucial element must ignite the touchpaper. That lynchpin is trust. And we find ourselves in a suffocating pit of trust deficit.

After the people's mandate was stolen by a backdoor government, all those who had stolen billions from the Malaysian people through 1MDB and a variety of scandals – almost a new one is exposed with each passing week – were brought back to power. But the new government failed miserably and used the pandemic to tighten its grip on power, even preventing MPs from going to Parliament with the use of police force. We have watched two bloated cabinets reap the rewards of their position while prices rose around the people. We have seen elites evade justice while a parent stealing for their starving family is thrown in jail. So, we cannot return to the old ways – the 'normal' that Reformasi grew up to stand against and that we have worked to oppose and change for the last twenty years.

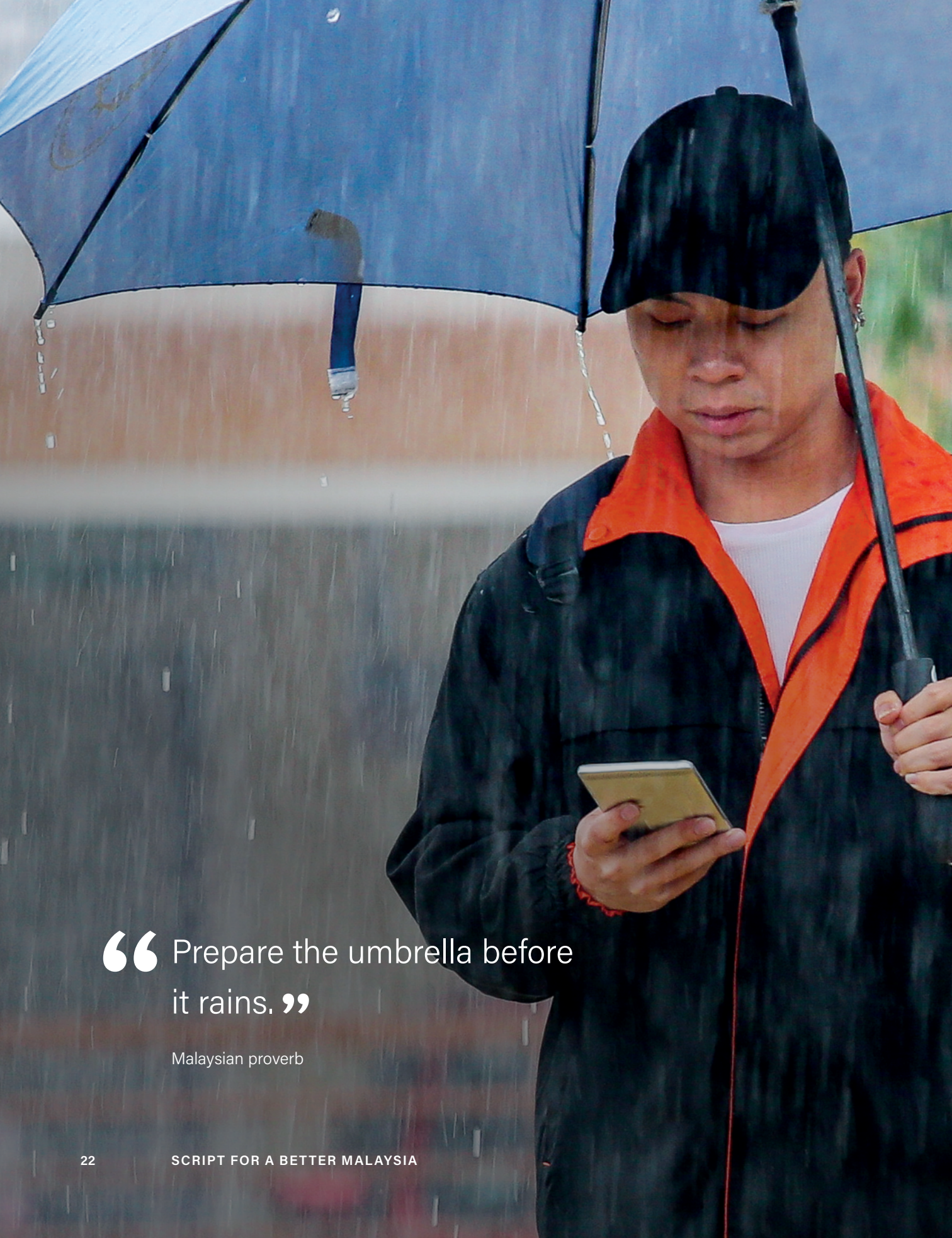
The failures of public policy and the ongoing machinations of some politicians who amass wealth for themselves have taken their toll on the rakyat. We cannot ignore the growing cynicism among those who are losing hope in politicians and the sacred trust held between our government and the people. It was in the 14th General Election that you – people – flexed your true power and said enough is enough. And we, those whom you elected, at the very least owe you our utmost effort to repair the

broken trust. And trust is not something one can demand or request; certainly not, this far along. The trust you deserve is only the trust earned through demonstrative action. And the trust this framework seeks to build is not just a trust upheld out of fear of losing face, but a trust that represents an ethical obligation we have to each other to not breach. Trust, like prayer or any other religious practice, should be totally embodied – where every day we politicians ask, as all people should ask, what are we doing to make sure we uphold our trust in others and work hard to ensure there is no loss of trust between politicians and citizens. In building bridges of trust, we build a cohesive multicultural and diverse society, one that pursues sustainability with care and compassion, reinforced with respect, emboldened by innovation, and that sees to prosperity for all in the future. SCRIPT lays the foundation stone for a new and improved covenant between all Malaysians based on mutual trust and which allows us to progress towards brighter tomorrows.

The SCRIPT framework is an integrated, holistic endeavour: its six components do not function in isolation; they are interconnected and interdependent and enhance each other through feedback. Collectively, they will lay the foundations for a thriving, dynamic, and inclusive society. Our rapidly changing, turbulent era forces us to take account of changing circumstances. But to wipe the slate totally clean and start anew would be absurd. We must take stock of the long and diverse history of Malaysia, learn from its mistakes and build upon its successes. In this reflection, the diverse languages, ethnic histories, and wonderful religious and philosophical traditions of Malaysia will serve as the foundation of our approach. We must now move beyond empty and selfish pursuits of power, the myopic prejudices of the past, and the complacent shady money politics that has taken hold of Malaysia. It is time we act for the best interests of our nation and all our people. We seek not so much to create a new Malaysia, in the refreshing brand-tested comforting definition, but a radical improvement – an evolution. Through strong and truthful leadership, my government will not only lead, but walk with its citizens, facing the trials of growth and carving out a solid ethical framework for its actions. It will stand for and with the citizens, holding itself accountable to all mistakes and misguided pursuits of the past and present. Dedicated to the highest levels of transparency, rooting out corruption and irresponsible practices, it aims to empower people and engage them in a great polylogue aimed at promoting prosperity for all. It is dedicated to spreading futures literacy to all its citizens and developing a navigational approach to postnormal times. We move forward as a sustainable nation dedicated to our responsibilities to each other as citizens, bestowed with integrity and dignity. And we move forward collectively, consciously anticipating and navigating emerging changes – ready for whatever tomorrow has in store for us.

“ The ruler must spread out a carpet of justice for his people, erect a tent of security, and fly the banners of forbearance with their fluttering tassels. He must pour out rivers of charity for them, restraining the hands of iniquity from reaching them, while showering them with the rain clouds of noble deeds. The most important of all the aforementioned qualities is justice. ”

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī, *The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*, p96



“ Prepare the umbrella before  
it rains. ”

Malaysian proverb

## Our Vision

To build a sustainable and prosperous Malaysia based on care and compassion, mutual respect, innovation, and trust, where inclusiveness and equality is embraced by the whole nation – ultimately a just Malaysian society.

“ SCRIPT: Sustainability, Care and Compassion, Respect, Innovation, Prosperity, Trust – key terms for shaping and building a thriving, dynamic future for Malaysia. ”



## The SCRIPT Narrative

Our goal is to build a Sustainable, Caring and Compassionate, Respectful, Innovative, and Prosperous Malaysia based on mutual Trust. The key words of our vision spell SCRIPT, which is about shared trust between the government and the citizens based on transparency and cooperation. It recognises the right of every Malaysian citizen, whatever his or her background, to live in sustainable communities and environments. It highlights care and compassion in all segments of society to promote equality and equal opportunity. It encourages mutual respect as a social and cultural norm to enhance inclusiveness. It seeks to make innovation prevalent in all aspects of national life. And SCRIPT is about pursuing prosperity within a sustainable and future-oriented framework.

# SCRIPT Policy Framework

Our policy agenda focusses not just on the current problems and requirements of Malaysia but also on the nation's future needs and potentials. It takes into consideration the changes that have transformed the world; and aspires to navigate the country through the complexity, contradictions, and chaos of postnormal times. The language, concepts, and culture of Malaysia are at the heart of this framework.

The emphasis is on synthesis, combining established practices with new methods designed to cope with emerging issues and uncertainties. The six drivers of SCRIPT – Sustainability, Care and Compassion, Respect, Innovation, Prosperity, and Trust – as well as different aspects of the policy framework are interconnected and integrated, enforcing and enhancing each other. The framework is designed as a reiterative process, subject to changes and constant revisions; and as a participatory endeavour that invites involvement and inputs from all segments of society. Together, using this framework, we can heal our nation with substantive reform and progress into brighter futures.

“ We must ever be mindful that written constitutions are mere parchment pieces. It is important that there must be, in the hearts and minds of those who are entrusted to administer and uphold the Constitution, a belief in the values and principles that animate the august document. ”

Sultan Azlan Shah, *Fifty Years of Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law*, Opening Address of the 14th Malaysian Law Conference, 2007



First, for each driver, we will outline:

## Conventional Definition

The commonly understood meaning of the term.

## Our Definition

What we mean by the term and how we have defined it in the contemporary Malaysian context.

## Vision

What is our specific vision regarding the driver?

## Target Population/Areas

Who, where, and what is the policy aimed at? Is it targeted at a specific group of people/persons? Or a specific place or region? Or a specific issue or trend? Or is the target regional, national, or international in scope?

## Policy Imperatives

What are the essential elements of the policy regarding each driver? We will explore policy requirements for each driver, in some detail, from the following perspectives:

- Economic/Financial
- Legal
- Institutional
- Educational
- Social
- Cultural
- Urban
- Rural

In analysing these different perspectives, we need to have ongoing reflections. We must constantly reinforce the interwoven relationship of the six SCRIPT drivers. In other words, how does each driver acknowledge and follow the other five? At the same time, this reflection must take stock of the contemporary history of Malaysia. What existing structures, systems, and ideas work, can be enhanced, or ought to be done away with? Lastly, we should bear in mind the multiplicity of potentialities. When an action is taken, we must not only ask in what ways can we enact a policy, but also what variety of positive, negative, or subsequent order outcomes could result.

Second, we will add the postnormal dimensions.

In postnormal times, SCRIPT policies have to be able to cope with: Speed, Scale, Scope, and Simultaneity; rampant Contradictions; increasing Complexity, and have the infrastructure to deal with Chaos. We need to explore a set of specific questions for each element of postnormal times.

## Complexity

Do we have mechanisms to cope with emerging complexity? How do we reduce complexity? How do we look for profoundly simple solutions that would enable us to navigate and affect complex situations? How do we, in an increasingly interconnected global world, remain aware of entangled global and domestic linkages and systemic risks that may arise?

“ **BOAR:** Complexity lies Between Order  
And Randomness  
**DEEP:** Complexity cannot be easily  
Described, Evolved, Engineered or Predicted ”

Scott E Page, *Diversity and Complexity*, p32

## Contradictions

What potential contradictions are intrinsic to the policies? Where will resistance and opposition, producing contradictions, to the policy come from? Institutions, bureaucracy, interest groups, opposition parties, protests on the streets, radical movements, or spontaneous mobs? What risks can we anticipate and how could we defuse main risks and hurdles?

## Chaos

Are we overlooking a potential chaotic event lurking in the near future? What social or cultural elements may lead to ignorance of potential threats and chaotic events? Can we detect and monitor movement towards chaos? Is it possible to perceive an emerging chaotic event? Are we prepared for a full-blown chaotic event? How and why can chaotic instances wreak havoc on Malaysia? How can we keep Malaysian society informed and maintained in times of chaos?

## Simultaneity

Complex policy requires the simultaneity principle – working simultaneously across sectors, institutions, and organisations. How do we make connections and ensure that policies and goals – some seemingly opposing and contradictory – are implemented simultaneously by all concerned parties: government institutions, as well as public and private sectors, social and volunteer organisations, and NGOs?

Third, we will take into account the changing circumstances and potential possible and probable futures.

## Futures/Change

Are the policies adequately equipped for rapid change? Will accelerating change make the policies redundant in the next few years? How do we adjust the policies to continuous change? What is the difference between the current and future policy context? What trends and emerging issues may lead to rethinking and reformulating of policies? What are potential scenarios and how can they assist us in navigating our preferred futures?

“ Why do recipes on offer for the big questions of our time seem increasingly inadequate? Policies for health care, financial regulations, and climate change all struggle to be effective, notwithstanding lots of smart scientists, politicians, and journalists chipping in. It is not that the solutions are ill thought through, or that the analysis is wrong. It is that we look for solutions through a frame that doesn't capture the interplay that drives complex system. The interconnected nature of the problems we are facing doesn't fit the standard frame's simplified assumptions. ”

David Colander and Ronald Kuper, *Complexity and the Art of Public Policy*, p12

Finally, we will consider how these policies could be monitored and if new and innovative establishments are required to nudge society towards SCRIPT policies.

## Monitoring

How is the delivery of policies to be checked and progress tracked? Do we need mechanisms for feedback? How do we ensure that policies are connected across all levels and issues of contradictions and complexity while also being simultaneously handled? Are we able to monitor and prevent the emergence of chaotic events?

## Enabling Institutions

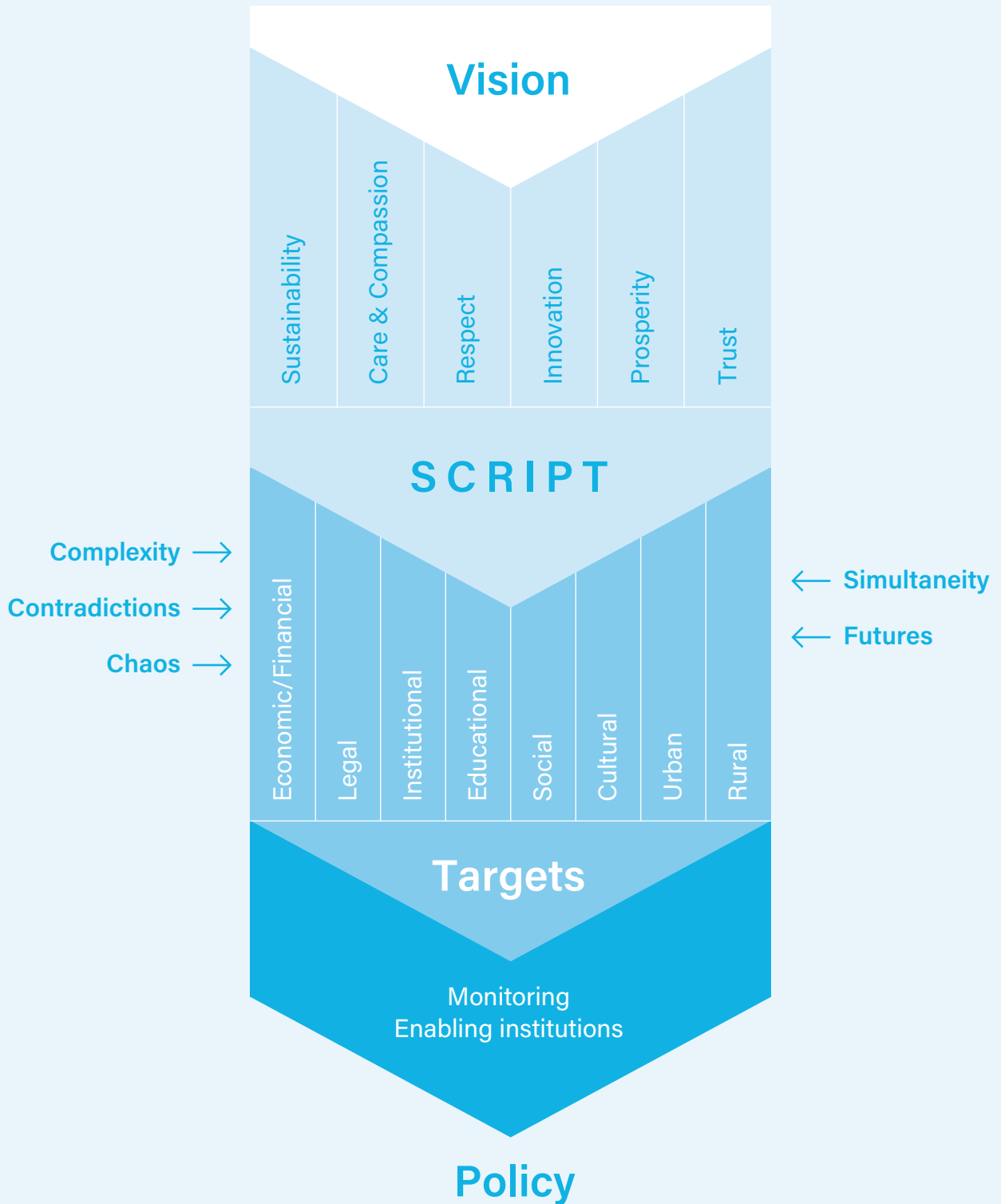
A key focus of policy within the complex evolving economy involves positively influencing the evolution of key institutions that appreciate complexity and the potential for chaos, and work to transcend contradictions. What new and innovative institutions would be needed to take ownership of the policy, guide it from its inception to the final outcome, oversee it through Malaysia's complex government and bureaucratic machinery, promote it to the public, adjust it to changing situations, and monitor its progress? Due to the problems that have arisen over the last two years concerning bloated cabinets and government apparatuses, the general policy stands against the creation of institutions, but where necessary many of the existing institutions will be integrated, consolidated, or reoriented to make for an efficient government and bureaucracy capable of carrying out the change our nation needs.

The SCRIPT policy framework is a joined-up, multiple level endeavour, presented here as a somewhat linear process. The diagram on the following page attempts to show the various dimensions of the policy framework and how it is related to futures and postnormal issues.

“ In the postnormal age, ‘facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high, and decisions urgent.’ ”

Silvio Funtowicz and Jerome Ravetz, 'Science for the Postnormal Age'

# The SCRIPT Policy Framework





SCRIPT

Sustainability

# Sustainability

## Conventional Definition

Sustainability refers to the need to develop appropriate policies and models required for the survival of humanity as well as the planet; it is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs and welfare of future generations. Popular parlance tends to focus discussion of sustainability on environmental policy and the reduction of non-renewable resource usage and pollution production. Sustainability embraces such ideas as overshoot, carrying capacity, ecological footprint, and tipping points to help shape a fair and sustainable future. It includes the atmosphere, rainforests, fresh waterways, oceans, soil, forests, and all forms of life that interact with them.

## Our Definition

The sustainability spoken of here must be pursued in our Malaysian way. The Malay word, *kemampanan*, speaks to a making, a process of sustainability that must be ongoing and a work of collective effort. The Malaysian notion of sustainability is also a balance or equilibrium (*keseimbangan*), that holds to the wellbeing of humanity itself; and a continued balance and humane respect for nature as well as the human person. Thus, sustainability for us not only includes the natural environment, but also the sustainability of rural and urban communities, as well as families and individuals.

## Vision for Sustainability

We aim to build upon global standards to promote a new culture of sustainability in all aspects of life.

“ Do not degrade the Earth after it has been so well ordered – call on Him fearing and hoping. The mercy of God is close to those who do good. It is God who sends the winds, bearing good news of His coming grace, and when they have gathered up the heavy clouds, We drive them to the dead land where We cause rain to fall, bringing out all kinds of crops, just as We shall bring out the dead. Will you not reflect? Vegetation comes out of good land in abundance, by the will of its Lord, but out of the bad land only scantily: We explain Our Revelations in various ways to those who give thanks. ”

The Qur'an 7: 56-58



## Target Populations/Areas

While it is important to reiterate that the SCRIPT framework is a holistic, society wide approach for Malaysia, in order to initiate the process, it is important to identify starting targets to focus the policy making process. With regards to sustainability, we will target the overall ecology and environment of Malaysia, especially protected green spaces, bodies of water, and wildlife. It is also important to keep in mind spaces zoned (or awaiting approval for or in dispute over zoning) for development, redevelopment, or reclamation. It is crucial to also keep in mind the customary diversity within Malaysia's various communities. Businesses, commerce, and industry will be essential targets and stakeholders in the policies created. It is key to keep in mind coastal and landlocked communities as well as urban, rural, and rural heartland communities across the country. Individual behaviour of Malaysians will also be a critical target for sustainable policy in Malaysia.

## Policy Imperatives

The undertaking of creating a sustainable Malaysia cannot be achieved by the labours of a few. A sustainable Malaysia can only be attained through the collective actions of all Malaysians, of all backgrounds, in all of their diversity. The problems that have risen from historic failures in sustainability are the problems of all Malaysians. Sustainability considerations need to be integrated into all areas of the economy, commerce, business, law, education, and institutional frameworks. We need to endorse sustainability in cultural matters and to promote sustainability in social and individual behaviour.

## Economic/Financial

Sustainability is not an unfamiliar buzzword across many sectors, but it is imperative that the Economic/Financial apparatuses of Malaysia embody the sustainability we are talking about here, actualising the value through practice and elevating it beyond a simple fad. This requires us to develop and promote a new economy based on sustainable ethics. We will have to abolish tax concessions and incentives that allow businesses and enterprises to pursue unsustainable goals and practices that show ill regard for human dignity or the natural world. Instead, we can replace these with a sustainability tax related to environmental aspects of climate change, social justice, and specific issues at the regional and local level. We will have to earmark the funds that allow us to explore new methods for renewable energy sources, especially

endorsing research on sustainability in higher education. Sustainable objectives need to be incorporated into procurement strategies while businesses themselves should take stock in this value by developing targets and goals for sustainable practices. Economic incentives can assist in nudging more sustainable business across all of Malaysia. In taking on a more sustainable approach to economic policy, bridges also need to be built. Positive economic links need to be promoted between urban and rural areas. Likewise, we need to negotiate the intervention of gig economic utilities within conventional businesses and practices to the benefit of all, making sure no one is left behind in the process. We should also refine and develop new recycling incentive program that gives money back for recycling.

## Legal

The building of a legal infrastructure and precedents around sustainability will be crucial to the success of the policies proposed here. We will begin by developing codes of sustainable practice for businesses and institutions. In so doing, it will also be essential to evaluate current laws and codes to improve their adherence to a sustainable Malaysia as well as reduce redundancy. New ordinances will need to be established that limit energy consumption, carbon emissions, and pollution. This can be achieved through the enacting of stricter enforcement and penalty for laws concerning sustainability, such as road safety for those walking or using alternative transport and for environmental damages incurred. This includes creating anti-smoking and clean air legislation as well as introducing legal rights and protections for rainforests, rivers, flora, and fauna. To combat corruption on these fronts, we must impose higher fines and punishments for failing to comply with strict environmental impact studies and assessments, to be conducted by third party bodies. Beyond the environment we need to make sure the people's economic wellbeing is sustainable as well. We will need to explore the concepts of minimum wage, liveable wage, and universal basic income to determine the best and most practical legal implementation in order to alleviate poverty. Beyond our present woes, we must be ready for future legal needs by researching and exploring laws concerning automation to mitigate job losses. Preparations will need to be made for legal reform needed to accommodate accidents involving self-driving cars, robot malpractice, and other extrapolations on contemporary laws into the age of robots and AI. Investigation into the incorporation of crimes against future generations into Malaysia's legal code to deter unsustainable and wasteful practices by groups and individuals will also give Malaysia the legal edge it needs for navigating the future.

“ Justice is a word that is loaded and dense with values and meanings that include charitable deeds, carrying out everything that is required in aqidah and shariah, fulfilling trust, abandoning tyranny, giving rights to those who are entitled and pursuing justice with a sense of equality. ”

Siddiq Fadzil, *On Islam & Being Malay*, pxvii

## Institutional

In order for Malaysia to maintain sustainable policies, our institutions themselves must become sustainable. We must ensure that all staff in all ministries and government institutions, businesses and corporations are fully aware of sustainability policy and are committed to implementing it. This will need to be a society wide move. One idea is to encourage the staggering of working hours, holidays, and organisations and institutions that provide flexible working conditions to balance work from home, reduce traffic and travel, and accommodate for mental health considerations. We will have to determine a proper pension scheme that encourages sustainable retirement and accounts for labourers left out of present schemes such as farmers and those employed by the gig economy. Where we lack institutions to carry out the vision of a more sustainable Malaysia, we will devise new entities to promote and implement recycling, clean air and water, and carbon footprint reducing programmes. To get ahead on regional and global sustainability standards, a special task force will be commissioned within the ministries related to environment and natural resources to build a plan for energy security, greater alternative energy conversion, and for getting to Net-Zero greenhouse gas emissions. Another idea is to establish an arbitrator between waste collection services, environmental protection services, local leaders, businesses, and individuals to develop clear modes of communication and flow for a sustainable Malaysia. To ultimately track the move towards a more sustainable Malaysia, a review and consolidation of officers throughout the civil service will need to take place as well as an integration of the relevant ministries must occur that eliminates redundancies and inefficiencies. The result will be an efficient and effective Ministry of Sustainability, charged with overseeing these new practices and reforms.

## Educational

Building a sustainable Malaysia begins with the way in which it is promulgated through our educational systems. Sustainability education and practice need to be introduced at primary and secondary levels. To maximise our educational potential, we must refine our interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary degrees, especially those with a focus on sustainability, in universities. Beyond what educational structures we already have, we should be promoting creative school and campus renovations that nudge smaller class sizes, technological augmentation, and green/natural architecture to lead the way in sustainable development as well as prepare spaces for sustainability in the face of crisis, especially with regards to lessons learned from

the Covid-19 pandemic. We need to make immediate investment into securing the infrastructure needed for distance learning. To assist and enhance the Malaysian educational experience we should also encourage 'out of the classroom' education in urban, rural, and natural environments, including educational-business cooperation, shared spaces, and facilities for early childcare and development. Beyond the spaces we can explore, parallel development of a curriculum that couples green policy and future natural concern with multiculturalism and national unity needs to be undertaken, without sacrificing our Islamic values or traditional wisdom, particularly with regards to moral and critical thinking. We need to also create sustainability research centres and institutes in institutions of higher learning, especially research centres studying climate change and its potential impact on Malaysia.

“ No Muslim plants a tree or sows a seed and then a bird, or a human, or an animal, eats from it but that it is charity for him. ”

Prophet Muhammad (Bukhari and Muslim)

## Social

Some of the greatest challenges, yet the most pivotal rewards for the society wide shift reside in the social aspects of building a more sustainable Malaysia. From the onset, the launching of public service campaigns to promote a sustainable Malaysian culture will lay the groundwork. Civil society, conventional media, and even social media should be used for their ability to promote sustainable choices throughout Malaysia. Here, we can also establish a culture of reduction and recycling through public campaigns and providing services. A continued and reinforced push for more anti-plastics campaigns aimed at eliminating the usage of single-use plastics (especially in groceries, takeaway containers, and food storage) should run parallel to the development of replacement materials to carry out these duties at a reduced price to producers and consumers. Launching youth cleaning initiatives (competitions and scholarship/grant endowments) will teach sustainability and incubate youth initiative and agency for innovative sustainable activities. At all levels we must also promote professional advocacy for sustainable practices. While localised advocacy will require individual will and initiative, on the larger scale we

will incentivise shared spaces, transport reduction, green/sustainable architecture, and a lifestyle that works with, as opposed to attempting to control the natural world around us. For any social shift to take up strong roots, we must lead by example through government shift towards sustainable options and practices.

## Cultural

While we have shown in our definition that the various cultures that comprise Malaysia are ripe with appreciation and adoration for sustainability, we must continue the process to evolve a culture and language of sustainability – recycling, waste reduction (plastics, electricity, sewage, etc.), cleaning initiatives, looking after neighbourhoods, educational campaigns and programmes, and other promotional grassroots efforts dedicated to sustainability. Sustainability can be a tool that we must sponsor for unifying the Malaysian people and building bridges between the diverse communities that comprise Malaysia. This can be optimised by launching redevelopment and renovations within urban and rural communities to retrofit and connect our communities, from the largest cities to the smallest kampongs, via sustainable building practices, use of materials, and shared values. Incentivising and providing infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclers, and green commuting will encourage sustainable lifestyles and steer society away from rampant consumerism. As Malaysian culture takes to heart a renewed approach to sustainability we will promote and provide facilities for eco-tourism and greater environmental conservation.

## Urban

Urban centres have long been regarded as the greatest threat to sustainable measures, but this notion can be challenged with a shift in our thinking, regarding how urban centres can play a vital role in building a more sustainable Malaysia. We will begin by introducing adequate safeguards for air quality and to combat the 'haze' and other environmental threats. Beyond environmental protection we must ensure access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services for the poor and the marginalised so that we can give higher quality of life to the worst off without endangering their or our futures. Provisions should also be made for suitable and mobile healthcare systems for the urban and rural poor. This continues with incentivising the building of new sustainable and resilient buildings or through sustainable renovation of pre-existing structures using local material and the evolution of indigenous architecture. Beyond the traditional urban space, we

should also provide access to green public spaces fit to the needs of all Malaysians, especially those requiring additional and special needs. To carry out these tasks we will promote and, where necessary, redesign environmentally sound building techniques, vehicle sharing, mass transit overhauls, electric vehicles and promote walkways, footpaths, runways, and other carbon footprint diminishing transport. And as technology advances, we must prepare for the increased usage of electric cars and alternative energy sources. This may require the exploration of infrastructure changes needed such as the installation of charge ports for electric cars and cool spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists. To gain the confidence of the people in these measures, we will seek to increase the citizen's capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable human settlement planning and management.

## Rural

It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel to carry out sustainable change, especially in rural areas and the rural heartland. We will begin by first identifying and supporting existing good practices in rural centres. Where sustainability deficits are found, we will introduce sustainable agriculture and farming practices that take advantage of new methods for irrigation, crop rotation, and alternative sources of energy. It will be crucial to develop sustainable rural communities that are empowered to participate in making a sustainable Malaysia. This will be the vehicle through which we promote renewable energy technologies in rural areas; establish solar and wind farms in poorer states (and strategised for localised empowerment). We will also motivate rural communities to participate in networks and the use of digital technologies, advocating for a merger of this and other sustainable innovations with indigenous wisdom, giving rural communities equal access and greater agency over their work and lifestyle without diminishing or threatening cultural or rural sentiments. Huge efforts will go into encouraging rural communities to anticipate change and acquire necessary skills and training for the futures ahead. So, we must fund rural projects aimed at providing solar collection panels to rural homes, offer subsidies for wind power collection units and incentivise water cleaning and usage reducing/recycling measures. To keep up a sustainable Malaysia in rural areas, we will ensure access to education and promote the creation of new centres of study to address agricultural and rural needs, providing a space for creative and innovative approaches to rural communities and practices.

## Complexity

For policy to be successful and not only sustainable for the nation, but also in and of itself, complexity must be accounted for. We must do all in our abilities to avoid oversimplification as well as complications when addressing situations and issues. To assist in this, it is helpful to develop multiple complimentary policies to accommodate diversity and balance small and large issues in sustainability. We must also develop sustainability networks that make it easy for individuals, communities, institutions, and governments to communicate freely and collaborate in building a sustainable Malaysia. As more and more of the issues we face become increasingly complex, we also need to develop complex approaches to sustainability that integrate different expectations, sectors, and views reflecting the multicultural context and complexity of Malaysia. Public space must also be made available to discuss such contradictory concepts as 'global and local', change and tradition, consensus and individual choice, risks and feasibility. To account for the vast changes that accompany a sustainable Malaysia, we need to establish a complex, yet balanced and complimentary taxation and economic system to create a sustainable economy that checks sustainability costs with sustainability benefits. At the societal level it is imperative to foster an appreciation of the complexities between communities (multiracial, urban/rural, multifairth, age divides, gender divides, etc.) to develop better understanding and bridge-building capacities. Throughout this whole process we must maintain a conscious awareness of deliberation and reiteration concerning sustainability policy and continually reduce divisions amongst people, institutions, and government.

## Contradictions

This new policy framework will assist in surfacing a variety of contradictions that have been buried and outright ignored. So, we start by acknowledging the widespread and potential contradictions inherent to old and new notions of sustainability. From there we will develop and anticipate strategies to counter contradictions from other political elements, vested interests, big business and multinational corporations, and all other efforts that could compromise the establishment of a sustainable Malaysia. Clearly established rules and regulations to ensure effective interface between community policies, deal with tensions and divergences, and resolve conflicts of interests will assist in cutting down rampant contradictions within our structures. To maintain a defence against the disruptions of contradictions, we must foster cooperation across all groups to enhance resilience

through diversity. Bring different actors – urban and rural communities, enterprises, workers, migrants, financiers, social institutions, researchers, and teachers – together to produce a higher probability of productive outcomes by acknowledging their special knowledge and experience in a larger polylogue.

## Chaos

Our policies will not take us far if we do not garner an appreciation and understanding of chaos in our contemporary world. This begins with monitoring potential chaotic events that could undermine sustainability in all its complex dimensions. To go further, we must study phenomenon that could lead to an ecological collapse in Malaysia. Critical here, we must continually assess the complex economy of Malaysia and the occurrences within the sustainability economy to avoid chaotic events that could cripple the nation. Likewise, we must also assess the domestic and global effect of extreme climate changes on the nation, including exploring the impact of rising sea level and salinity of the oceans on the Archipelago. While monitoring sustainability in Malaysia, we will create safeguards for security and other national and individual interests. To build upon this we will appropriately oversee social media so as to better understand chaotic behaviour and anticipate undesired outcomes. More potential solutions can be explored in staggering working hours, school times, and other time related activities to avoid congestion and reduce energy expenditures. We should combat the edge of chaos that arises on the border of human and natural habitats by enhancing, where necessary, protections for endangered species. We must also develop legislation and judicial conventions to deal with environmental catastrophe, individual/corporate impacts, complex defence of rights, and domestic/foreign environmental agreements and treaties.

## Simultaneity

For the policies mentioned here, not only will there need to be simultaneous planning and action between the different drivers and targets, but also within the driving values themselves. To aptly prepare for this needed simultaneous action, we must ensure consistency in decision-making across different ministries and government institutions. To assist in this, we need to confirm that relevant sustainability issues are addressed at all levels – for example, climate change at the national and international level, fiscal and legislative changes at the national

level, land use at the rural level, settlement and development issues at the urban level, and so on. Rules and regulations will be required to ensure an effective interface between rural and urban policies, deal with tensions and divergences, and resolve conflicts of interests. While working simultaneously, we must continue constantly reaffirming and reforming practices, codes, laws, and standard operating procedures to learn from past failures and prepare for maintaining order and continuity in the face of crises. To see this end out, we should establish a proper line of communication through local councils, social media, public service campaigns, institutions, the media, the government and all other parties to promote clarity and polylogue concerning a sustainable Malaysia.

## Futures/Change

As we move into the future and work in a space of constant change, we will need to anticipate and monitor potential economic or environmental crises. This will be reinforced through the examination of trends and emerging issues with potential impacts on the sustainability of the nation, communities, families, and individuals. We take this a step further by exploring second and third order (unintended) consequences of current policies, actions, and behaviour. Across the board we will need to evolve a culture of adaptability in policy implementation that allows for continual evaluation of law and prompts correction in the case of error or unintended consequence. We must remain mindful by considering the effects of policies here and now and what impact they may have on the future (Malaysia as a whole as well as future generations of Malaysians), considering how emerging technologies and social developments may disrupt physical, economic, communal, and cultural environments, and thus undermine and/or derail sustainability policies. We need to develop keen eyes in order to observe and detect important issues with serious future implications that have been overlooked, consider outliers with serious future implications, and anticipate future chaotic events. Finally, we need a variety of individuals in a variety of sectors to be constantly developing scenarios for the future sustainability of Malaysia. To assist our efforts, we must take stock of what Malaysia has that other countries do not to reform trade and international relations policies along with anticipating harmful tendencies towards protectionism, isolationism, and extreme nationalism. Finally we will have much work ahead in develop futures literacy among all Malaysians to prevent the colonisation of our futures.

## Monitoring

In order to track the progress and successful implementation of sustainable Malaysian policies, the government must establish and maintain an effective monitoring process that allows for continuous evaluation and adaptability to changing circumstances and needs. This will require developing systems that monitor the delivery of sustainable policies, track progress on various levels, receive feedback, and influence relevant change in policies when required. To reinforce these monitoring mechanisms, we must identify and manage critical sectoral interactions between the economic, legal, institutional, social, cultural, urban, and rural spheres. To ensure quality we must assess Malaysia's place in international rankings and standards with regards to sustainability while also adhering to existing accords and advancing higher global standards for sustainability. Effective monitoring will allow us to revise policies when dictated by emerging issues and keep us sensitively aware of potential for chaotic behaviour. We must develop proper means of communication that are received and taken into consideration by the government while maintaining transparency with the general public so that sustainable policies can live beyond their initiation.

## Enabling Institutions

Considering our definition, the policy imperatives discussed and their targets, and the postnormal dimensions at play, the following policies serve as the first steps towards a more Sustainable Malaysia.

Beginning with the government itself, we will evaluate the current government infrastructure with regards to the development of a sustainable Malaysia. Redundancies will be reduced while ministries and offices are consolidated or reoriented into a more efficient structuring that is less burdensome on Malaysian taxpayers. The result is a slimmed down cabinet and the trimming of a bloated government that optimises its ability to deliver more sustainable policies. Through this process we will integrate and consolidate the relevant ministers in order to create one Ministry of the Future or a Ministry for Sustainable Futures. In this more efficient government structuring, an appointed climate change czar will oversee this crucial matter until sustainability is solidified within the mission of all of Malaysia's ministries and the position is no longer needed. The days of creating posts and positions for political expediency are over. Once a post is created it will have an objective and once that objective is fulfilled or circumstances change, the post will be retired to make room for future emerging issues.

Meanwhile we will create citizen's networks aimed at promoting sustainability, futures awareness, and futures literacy to set up sustainable thinking for the rakyat and prepare them for the yet-unseen trials of tomorrow. Alongside this we will create sustainable futures courses, initiate ongoing polylogues, and establish research centres in universities to see out these aims. We must also encourage and incentivise new NGOs that promote sustainability throughout all areas of society. Starting in our major cities, but open to moving to locations where they are needed, we will establish futures/sustainability cultural hubs. Promotion of climate change and sustainability exhibitions will be critical to the cultural shifts we wish to see.

Beyond the work done at home we will also research ways to advance international cooperation on sustainability; and, where possible, make the Malaysian sustainability polylogue a global one. Throughout this process we will also encourage Malaysians to maintain sustainable practices when they go abroad. Meanwhile we will continuously seek ways of bridging sustainability discrepancies for those who come into Malaysia from elsewhere.

These suggestions are a starting point. But we must also seek together yet unexplored policies that can bring to life our vision of a sustainable Malaysia.

“ The future does not just happen by itself, automatically. It is created through our actions or inaction in the present. ”

Ziauddin Sardar, *Future: All That Matters*, p5



S C R I P T

# Care and Compassion



# Care and Compassion

## Conventional Definition

Care is defined as the looking out for and providing necessary maintenance and protection of the health and welfare of others. Care can be a random and one-time event, often disconnecting the provider of care from the receiver. Nowadays, care can be delivered indirectly such as through an automated or AI system. Compassion is defined as a feeling of sorrow or concern for another person's suffering or need accompanied by a subsequent desire to alleviate that suffering. The feeling of compassion is usually reserved as a feeling between two humans, but may be extrapolated to include other living or human-like entities. The focus is on compassion as an emotion: a short-lived feeling that anyone may experience. Strict definitions do not separate between feelings of empathy, sympathy, and compassion.

## Our Definition

Malaysian care and compassion take the conventional definitions to the next level. The Malay word for care is *peduli*; caring is *penyayang*, from the word for love. Compassion is *belas kasihan*; *kasih* is also love. So, love for the others – your neighbours, your community as well members of other communities and minorities – is central to the Malaysian definition of care and compassion. The care and compassion that Malaysia needs to reemphasise speaks to a larger social responsibility for each other. Compassion here is not a fleeting feeling, but a becoming of the other so as to not only feel the other's pain, but take it on and properly care for its ailments. Like the Islamic tenet of Zakat, where it is not only incumbent upon society to give, but the right of the society to receive, care and compassion is both a duty to give and a right to receive. Malaysian society must take on care and compassion with honesty and a desire to elevate all its members both in economic and financial terms as well as in attitude and behaviour. It will

raise society towards a deeper humanity that is respectful and sustainable and provides for ethical innovation and Malaysian prosperity.

## Vision for Care and Compassion

Our purpose is to reignite a caring and compassionate society within Malaysia that not only treats the less fortunate, but empowers all citizens to tend to the basic needs of others through adequate provisions of social welfare, affordable food and housing, and healthcare as well as suitable services and advocacy for the poor and the marginalised.

## Target Population/Areas

At the heart of care and compassion policy in Malaysia are the disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities that we share this country with. In particular, policy will need to target the urban and rural poor as well as the poor in the rural heartland. This also extends to special needs persons and the elderly as well as minors in various communities. The homeless, refugees, and other marginalised persons will require our focussed attention. Key target areas for these policies include educational institutions, government institutions, and businesses and corporations. It is important to remember that while these targets constitute a starting point, the SCRIPT approach must be a society-wide endeavour, especially considering our aim of making a Caring and Compassionate Malaysia.

## Policy Imperatives

The emphasising and ascension of care and compassion in Malaysian society requires a wide overhaul of our culture. Legal provisions, educational institutions, government institutions, and private business and enterprise must pursue a framework of guidelines for care and compassion. While upholding the dignity of target populations, policy must complement the other aspects of SCRIPT to initiate a new social outlook and culture of care and compassion.

## Economic/Financial

The economic and financial sectors will be critical in implementing care and compassion policies in Malaysia. Care and compassion are not only key drivers

“ Have compassion  
on those who live on earth  
and  
He who is in heaven  
will have compassion on you. ”

Prophet Muhammad (al-Tirmidhi)



of SCRIPT, but must also be inculcated into models and systems of humane economics in Malaysia. Special funds will need to be established or allocated in order to develop affordable housing for the urban poor as well as to support the rural poor and promote rural enterprises. The government must incentivise upward bound career programmes in both government and private sector businesses. In order to secure these needs we should explore the development of appropriate inheritance and capital gains tax to raise funds for initiatives directed at the poor and the uplifting of poorer communities. These moves will be fortified through the establishment of Compassionate Care Credit Unions and Compassionate finance institutions that provide funding for alleviating poverty, promoting small scale enterprises, and encourage innovation in rural and urban areas. Based on the model of Tabang Haji, a critical reform comes by way of insuring an effective and transparent Zakat fund in each state that provides emergency support for the poor and disadvantaged. Alongside this reform we must endorse further development of more sophisticated Islamic finance and banking to create a model for national economic institutions. We acknowledge the enormous potential of Islamic finance by reorienting it towards fulfilling *maqasid shariah* – justice grounded in the empowerment of the poor and marginalised – instead of allowing it to replicate conventional, deeply flawed, systems. To ensure we appreciate Malaysia's real economic situation we must recalibrate the markers of economic progress to focus more on the Gini coefficient than on GDP, develop a Malaysian definition of poverty, and transform the national economic lexicon to reduce financial divisions within society and seek solutions to financial hardship. Further assistance must be provided through the establishment of scholarships and grants for the study of innovative approaches to care and compassion, especially in the fields of business, medicine, and social services. To enshrine care and compassion within our financial culture we must build cooperation between the government and various businesses and corporate bodies to negotiate a social bailout to assist the financially immobilised population (e.g. forgiving/paying off of debt unethically accrued, forgiving/paying off of student loan debt, creating immigrant/refugee financial assistance and career programmes, creating career/financial aid programs to lift individuals and families out of poverty, establish robust pension programmes, national healthcare provisions, establish a disaster relief fund, as well as current and future recovery assistance provisions).

## Legal

If we want care and compassion to flourish in our culture, then our laws and legal principles should embody the same prioritisation of values. First, we must create a code of ordinances that integrates caring and compassion into legal practices and law-making. In Parliament we then have to introduce better legislation concerning a living wage that provides the means of basic economic survival for all. Legislation should also target improving accessibility to public institutions for the elderly and people with special needs as well as seeking better protection of the rights of migrants and refugees, including refining the legal definitions of these marginalised peoples. We must establish agents of advocacy for those who are poor and disenfranchised, ensuring their legal rights and defences. The government must also provide access to educational and advocacy resources for the poor and marginalised. More keen investigation, regulation, and prosecution of unethical practices that resulted in the disenfranchisement of others will allow for care and compassion to take root in our legal system. A long overdue reform is needed for immigration, visa, and citizenship laws to educate and incorporate care and compassion. The establishment of a Court of Protection provides a space for decisions to be made on financial or welfare matters for people who lack mental capacity. Crucial to an unbiased system, the continued and reinforced promotion of judicial independence based on the wisdom of our national law scholars to inculcate care and compassion in their rulings as well as provide fair and equal judgement before the rule of law to all persons, regardless of their background, is essential.

## Institutional

Care and compassion can be embodied at the institutional level through the introduction of care and compassion guidelines in government institutions, corporations, and businesses. Beyond our existing institutions, the expansion of community defined volunteer organisations and opportunities should be promoted, focussed on care and compassion policies. To set the example, we must initiate a policy for the integration of care and compassion into all government institutions. To provide oversight, a regulatory body must be tasked with overseeing the implementation and follow through of the integration of care and compassion within Malaysian institutions. A particularly focussed innovation of Malaysia's justice and penal institutions must embody the values of care and compassion into their day-to-day duties. For posterity's sake, we must establish cooperation between government, business, educational, and social institutions to explore practical bailouts and

initiatives to promote care and compassion in Malaysian society through the ending of homelessness by providing universal access to healthcare, opportunities of upward bound mobility and educational access, modes for access to a living income, and relief of financially immobilising situations.

## Educational

To set up the next generation for success and the bettering of Malaysia, our educational targeted policies are critical. To begin, we must develop and introduce care and compassionate curriculum in primary and secondary schools. Beyond the classroom, we need to promote campaigns that emphasise care and compassion in the home, at work, at school, and throughout the country that incorporate Islamic values, indigenous cultural, as well as other religious and philosophical concepts, and the rich historical backgrounds of various communities. In higher education we must promote research on care and compassion issues and policies in universities and other educational establishments. Focussed research should be undertaken on social innovations in rural and urban areas. To alleviate the burden of educational expenses, we must establish scholarships and grants for grassroot initiatives that explore the integration of further care and compassion in Malaysian culture. To embody care and compassion in Malaysian education, we should continue exploring ways to mitigate costs, provide equal access, and eliminate financial burdens on those seeking higher levels of education.

## Social

Malaysia's rich diversity allows for great opportunities to embolden care and compassion at the societal level. But a more systematic approach begins with identifying what norms and tastes should be encouraged or discouraged by society, norms conducive to care and compassion should be particularly promoted, and efforts to integrate them into the institutional structures of Malaysia must be made a priority. The government must also promote non-profit and volunteer social and healthcare services – compassionate care results from a provider's policy to distribute services free or at a discount to individuals who meet certain criteria. We must seek updates and expansions of social security, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, public assistance, adequate pension or retirement income, and educational assistance, particularly for the urban and rural poor. To ensure an environment of care and compassion we need to identify and eliminate ecologically

and socially damaging work. Initiatives should be prioritised, established, and launched to improve healthcare access and see the end of homelessness, unemployment, and poverty. Citizen empowerment will be critical to a caring and compassionate Malaysia. To optimise this, we need to incentivise volunteer work that promotes community engagement and individual empowerment as well as promotes social self-control.

## Cultural

As a multicultural confluence, Malaysia provides us with a profound groundwork. To utilise what we are already blessed with, we must promote care and compassionate notions in Malaysia's languages, religions, histories, and other systems of morality through a public service campaign. Building off what is already inherent, we must emphasise care and compassion in cultural festivals, holidays, and events. Special considerations should be made to promote NGOs that work on helping others, act as catalysts in communal negotiations to bring different ethnic and religious communities together, and encourage forgiveness and social justice. The government's policies must encourage the cultural turn on attitudes towards healthcare and social care professionals to make for a Malaysian society that values and properly rewards those called to the service of their fellow humans. In light of the hidden pandemic that ran parallel to that of Covid-19, we must endorse greater cultural understanding around mental health issues to develop a caring and compassionate Malaysia dedicated to the eradication of mental health ignorance and the causes of psychological deterioration. To prepare our culture for a future with robots and AI incorporated into healthcare and society, we need to be exploring how care and compassion will change in this new technological age.

## Urban

Our urban spaces provide a rich and often untapped potential for making for a more caring and compassionate Malaysia. To unleash that potential, we must develop affordable housing and poverty alleviation programs while also delivering compassionate, high quality, affordable healthcare services, and public provisions for the elderly and the disfranchised that account for treatment of the whole person, physical and mental. Profoundly simple moves can effectively make policy more caring and compassionate. We must evaluate and improve urban access and mobility for citizens with special needs while also working to develop a safer

infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and mass transit commuters. We need to create innovative spaces for community interaction with free air conditioning and Wi-Fi access. To embolden citizen empowerment, the government must endorse urban volunteer efforts focused on care and compassion between and amongst Malaysians. Overall, we must promote community spirit and indigenous culture in urban developments so that care and compassion can thrive in what is often thought of as soulless, materialistic urban centres.

## Rural

Care and compassion policy has a lot of lost ground to make up for in rural areas. We need to develop plans, guidelines, and procedures to alleviate rural poverty. Care and compassion policies promote sustainable agriculture and sustainable rural communities that empower rural entrepreneurship and innovative thought towards kampong culture. Rural empowerment will also require careful consideration of technological advancements which begins with us developing systems and infrastructure for greater Internet access. Rural communities must also get equal care and compassion through the establishment of mobile medical units and rural healthcare provider programmes and clinics. As rural and urban divides become less visible, we must build stronger care and compassion connections between urban and rural areas as well as diverse communities within particular rural areas. Yet as we do this, we must pay attention to developing care and compassion centres for rural populations that make it so that individuals in need do not feel they have to move to urban areas to have a good life.

## Complexity

As we pass into a more digital age, a failure to account for both postnormal times and our future with a care and compassion impetus, a critical humanism stands to be lost. To prepare for the complexity involved, we must be aware of developments in genetics, computing codes, and digital media which could usher and enhance complexity. This includes preparing for advancements in AI and automation that will require deep navigation to maintain care and compassion in Malaysia. Beyond what we are seeing today, we need to anticipate the complexity of integrating new technologies into society and prepare for massive systemic changes and their effects on society and the human experience. Understanding that changes made in Malaysia could have a profound ripple effect in the region, anticipating how to

foster positive regional outcomes will see to the prevention of conflict and backlash in ASEAN and the Pacific, as well as the global communities Malaysia is a part of. Ultimately, this sets up the care and compassion we embody in Malaysia to reach out and uplift people within and beyond our borders.

## Contradictions

Recent events have played a key role in surfacing a variety of contradictions to the care and compassion policy we hope to instil in Malaysia. We must anticipate contradictions that may come in conflict with other policies, especially relating to finance, economy, and business. This anticipation should take special regard of the opposition to care and compassion policies found in financial policies regarding inheritance tax and other measures that have allowed the rich and powerful to get richer at the expense of the people. We also need to monitor the deeper contradictions that arise between efficiency and the pursuit of a culture of care and compassion. We can reduce contradictions by emphasising the quality of life measured in convivial culture and human relationships rather than the quantity of life measured in consumer goods and material wealth.

## Chaos

Failure to understand and appreciate chaos has led to a historical deficit in care and compassion policies in Malaysia. To improve our situation, we need to establish effective modes of communication between government, communities, and individuals through social media and other channels to prevent chaotic events. In step with this, we need to monitor and prevent destructive positive feedback in the use of social media. Focus should be drawn to improving our awareness of the dangers of hate speech and fake news that could lead to chaos. To aid this endeavour we must promote responsible and ethical journalism to undermine fake news and maintain societal transparency. To avoid racial and religious tensions as well as empower the people, we must promote community participation amongst different ethnic and religious communities. It is crucial that we monitor present and future applications of the rule of law and social benefits in order to maintain equity and fairness in justice and prevent individuals who think they are above the law from taking advantage of the system.

## Simultaneity

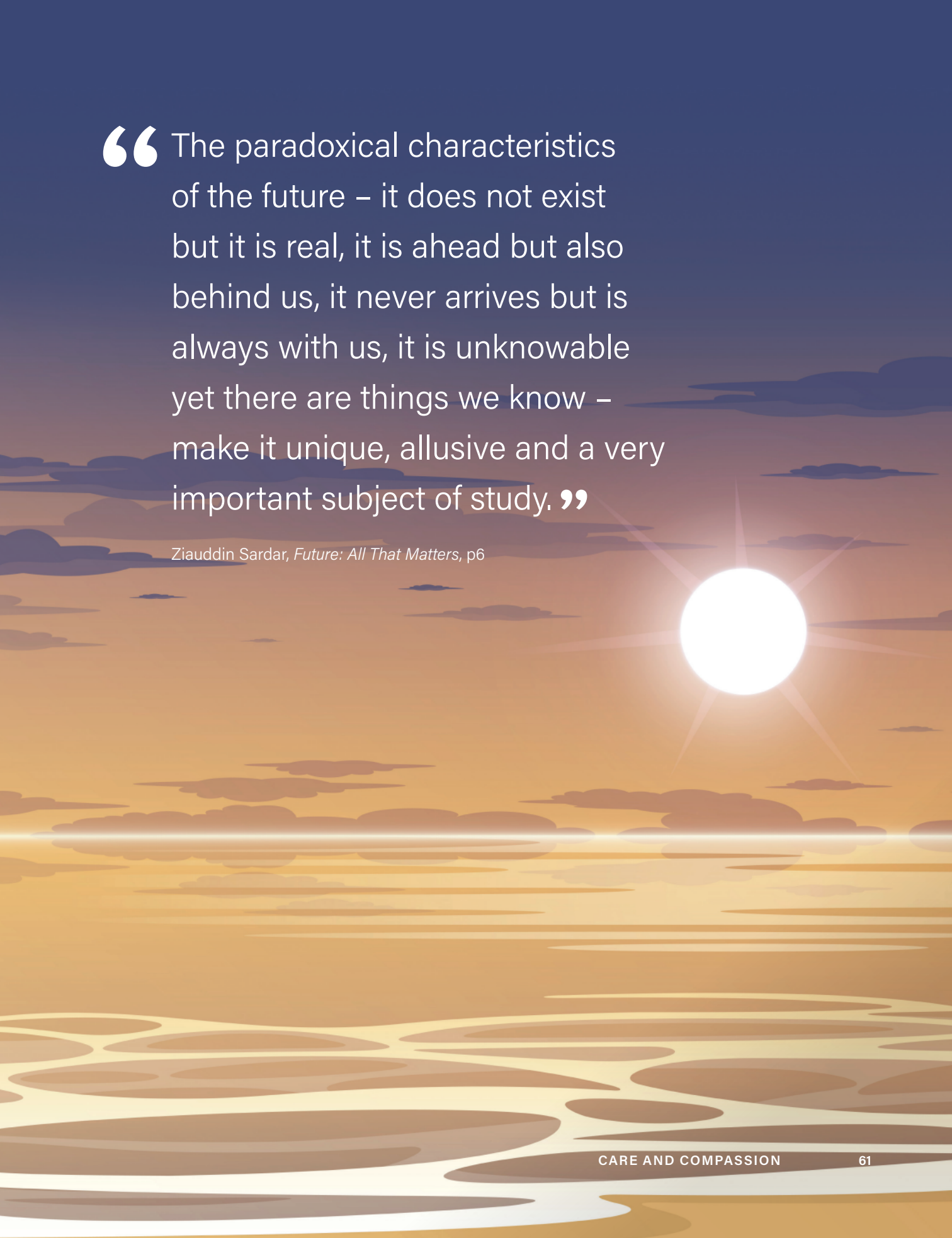
To account for the simultaneity in which events presently occur and in which we must act, we must certify consistency of care and compassion policies and decisions across relevant ministries, government institutions, corporations and businesses, NGOs, and voluntary organisations. Such a societal endeavour requires the promotion of citizen's involvement in care and compassionate issues, encouraging bottom-up policies and efforts that allow endogenous evolution as institutions evolve. We must also be capable of anticipating issues that may arise in simultaneous implementation of policies to different targets (urban and rural, poverty and healthcare, national and community, cross-cultural). At both the national and more local levels we must also encourage the balancing of care and compassion with other, seemingly more practical, concerns to prevent a sacrifice in principles while making difficult decisions.

## Futures/Change

Much of the more dystopian outlook towards the future is rife with threats towards the principles of care and compassion. To oppose these nightmares and optimise the positive potentials for care and compassion policies in Malaysia's future, we must examine both local and international trends and emerging issues that could enhance or thwart efforts to promote care and compassion. We must also be prepared for the advancements of technology and their implications on care and compassion in Malaysia from automation to AI and robots. This will require us to balance innovative advancements with indigenous wisdom to develop more preferred futures that maintain the humane element requisite for a Malaysia dedicated to care and compassion. From there our government must develop scenarios for caring and compassionate futures. We must explore future potentialities for a more caring and compassionate nation as we seek to better develop futures literacy among all Malaysians.

## Monitoring

To keep track of our progress on care and compassion policies in Malaysia, we need to develop monitoring protocols for assessing the impact of care and compassionate policies. Oversight of care and compassion initiatives will be tasked to the appropriate regulatory body. By recognising and working with international groups and organisations we allow for greater transparency and cooperation



“ The paradoxical characteristics of the future – it does not exist but it is real, it is ahead but also behind us, it never arrives but is always with us, it is unknowable yet there are things we know – make it unique, allusive and a very important subject of study. ”

Ziauddin Sardar, *Future: All That Matters*, p6

in the spirit of care and compassion in regard to Malaysia and our international neighbours. It is essential that we develop procedures and processes for transcending contradictions in disseminating care and compassion in Malaysia and evaluating community cohesion while establishing robust modes of communication to connect all and assure due care and compassion are an integral part of all social and cultural endeavours.

## Enabling Institutions

To launch ourselves onto the path towards a more caring and compassionate Malaysia, the following policies have been crafted considering our new definition, policy imperatives and targets, and with consideration of the postnormal factors at play.

We begin with an evaluation of current institutional efforts that aim to and are capable of being modified to enhance our vision of a caring and compassionate Malaysia. This process seeks to prevent redundancy while also avoiding the reinvention of the wheel on certain matters – engaging in historical, cultural aspects that can be carried over into new or reimagined policies. As we integrate and reorient the present cabinet and government structuring, we will task one or more institutions with overseeing the development of a culture of care and compassion throughout Malaysia.

Our policies will promote sustainable social benefit institutions – whereby individuals get social credits for taking socially positive actions. Overall, we will work to produce an ecosystem that is more conducive to people developing their social, rather than just their material, character. By declaring an annual 'Clean Malaysia Day' we will encourage national and local planetary care initiatives.

In Parliament we will launch the necessary measures, studies, and policy directives to embolden the inculcation of care and compassion within a reformed and refined healthcare system that treats the whole person – physical and mental – grounded in the lessons learned from the recent Covid-19 pandemic. To set the pace for our new direction while also setting a standard internationally, particularly in our region, for care and compassion, we will abolish capital punishment in Malaysia.

To seek our definition of care and compassion as a societal value in Malaysia, we must have the participation of all the people. So, from here we look forward to your suggestions and ideas that will help us forge together a caring and compassionate Malaysia.

“ Distrust of the action of leaders should not lead us to withdraw from acting ourselves. ”

Gordon Brown, *Seven Ways to Change the World*, p417



S C R I P T

Respect



# Respect

## Conventional Definition

Respect is defined as due regard for the opinions, desires, and rights of others. This definition is often associated with an admiration; a great concern for another's wellbeing derived from the admired individual's accolades. These accolades can range from years of experience concerning a particular matter to a level of education, achievement, or placement in society. Elements of obedience, loyalty, reliability, and etiquette are often associated with the conventional approach to respect. Respect can also refer to admiration of one's strength, which can lead to respect out of fear of the other. Respect is also a form of recognition, entitling the other to equal behaviour and allowance as is granted to the rest of the community, including access to power.

## Our Definition

While respect as we know it in the contemporary world has been twisted and equated with blind faith or filial piety, our definition must not be without humanity. The Malay word for respect, *hormat*, incorporates the notion of human dignity. The Islamic term *adab* has multiple meanings including courtesy, politeness, modesty – it is seen not just as the basis for civic behaviour but also as the very foundation of civilization. In Buddhist and Hindu cultures, the Golden Rule is the principle of treating others as one would like to be treated. As such, the Malaysian notion of respect emphasises all these aspects, with the accent on human rights and dignity. Respect is the cornerstone of our society and is granted regardless of reciprocity. It involves as much listening to the other as self-recognition. It acknowledges one's right to make mistakes and to improve upon them. It takes society towards a deeper understanding of itself as well as a greater cohesion as a nation of brothers and sisters.

## Vision for Respect

Our intent is to forge a mutually respectful just Malaysian society dedicated to inclusion, equality, integrity, and human dignity.

“ When agreements are made according to what is right, what is spoken can be made good. When respect is shown according to what is proper, one keeps far from shame and disgrace. ”

*Confucius, Analects, Book 1:13*

## Target Population/Areas

Respect policy will need to focus in on targeting the disenfranchised persons and communities within Malaysia while also focussing especially on the divisions within our communities and society. Policy will also need to be attentive to government ministries, government employees, and community leaders. Targets will need to be localised for urban and rural heartland communities. Beyond Malaysians per se, it is also important for policy aimed at building a respectful Malaysia to target international visitors, refugees, immigrants, and migrant workers. The holistic approach demanded by SCRIPT calls for us to consider respect as a national value that permeates within and beyond, lifting our reputation internationally.

## Policy Imperatives

The fundamental elements of respect are already present within our rich histories and cultural heritages. The culture of Malaysia is one of respect, yet the challenge resides in moving from respect anchored in authority to a new conception of respect found in equality. Policy pertaining to respect will need to focus on multiculturalism, equity, shared values, and equal access to rights, representation, and power over the decision-making process of the nation.

## Economics/Financial

The promotion of a new ethics for economic thought serves as a starting point that embodies the concept of Malaysian respect without compromising the other SCRIPT drivers. We need economic and financial policies that advocate humane economic models that emphasise respect in Malaysia and amongst Malaysians in their exchanges and encounters with others. To make up for lost time we must abolish tax concessions and incentives that allow businesses and enterprises to pursue disrespectful practices with ill-regard for past, present, or future human dignity. It is immediately necessary to examine ways to approach the ongoing debt crisis and the power of the financial sector of Malaysia through refining and reforming loan procedures and reviewing and cancelling unjust and disrespectful debts and financial impediments. To assist in this feat, we need to adjust economic equality policy to fit different localities and communities (urban, rural, suburban, ethnic, etc.) as no one-size-fits-all policy will be sufficient here. We need to also encourage endorsements for research concerning respect, equality, and multiculturalism in higher education. As we learn more, we must design an incentive system that helps local communities' entrepreneurial initiatives. Learning from our past, we need to enact strict respect-based regulations on pricing of public goods (tolls, transport, extraneous taxes, import/export fees, etc.), rents, land acquisition, subsidies, and in rewarding projects. To see this out the government must implement new price navigation measures to demonstrate respect throughout the whole process of farm-to-table, eliminating opportunities for corruption and leakage. So that we are prepared for future disruptions, we need to establish emergency funds to deal with unexpected humanitarian crises.

## Legal

A dismal lack of respect in our legal system will require substantial reform. To launch this process, we begin by evaluating current laws and codes to improve their adherence to respectful policy in Malaysia as well as reduce redundancy, scrutinising measures that are disrespectful or marginalising to citizens on the level of gender, race, creed, and lifestyle. This process will require the repealing of draconic and disrespectful laws and applications of laws with special regard to racial, religious, gender, and lifestyle inequalities in order to improve societal order and cohesion. Following this review and running in tandem to it, we must investigate potential reforms to allow for greater equity in representation and diversity within Parliament, the civil service, and other institutions. To show the people and the world

“ [If] Islam was side-lined, dissipated, or drowned out from the Malay culture... [it will] bring about Malay chauvinism. ”

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu*, p. 63.



we are ready for a long overdue change, we must initiate a national human rights audit and respect third party international audits requested of us. We must also establish a fund for legal assistance for citizens who feel disrespected in regard to their access towards equality and empowerment. To diminish Malaysia's experience of the tragedy of the commons, we need to establish ordinances that respect shared spaces (air/water cleanliness, smoking bans, traffic staggering, workplace conduct, infrastructure restructuring, etc.). Some of this can be addressed in Parliament alongside the introduction of legislation against bullying, unfair treatment, and harassment in the workplace. It is imperative that we enact stricter actions and punishments with regards to sexual harassment and discrimination throughout society. Thinking beyond our present situation, we must prepare the legal reform needed to accommodate accidents involving self-driving cars, robot malpractice, and other extrapolations on contemporary laws into the age of robots and AI.

## Institutional

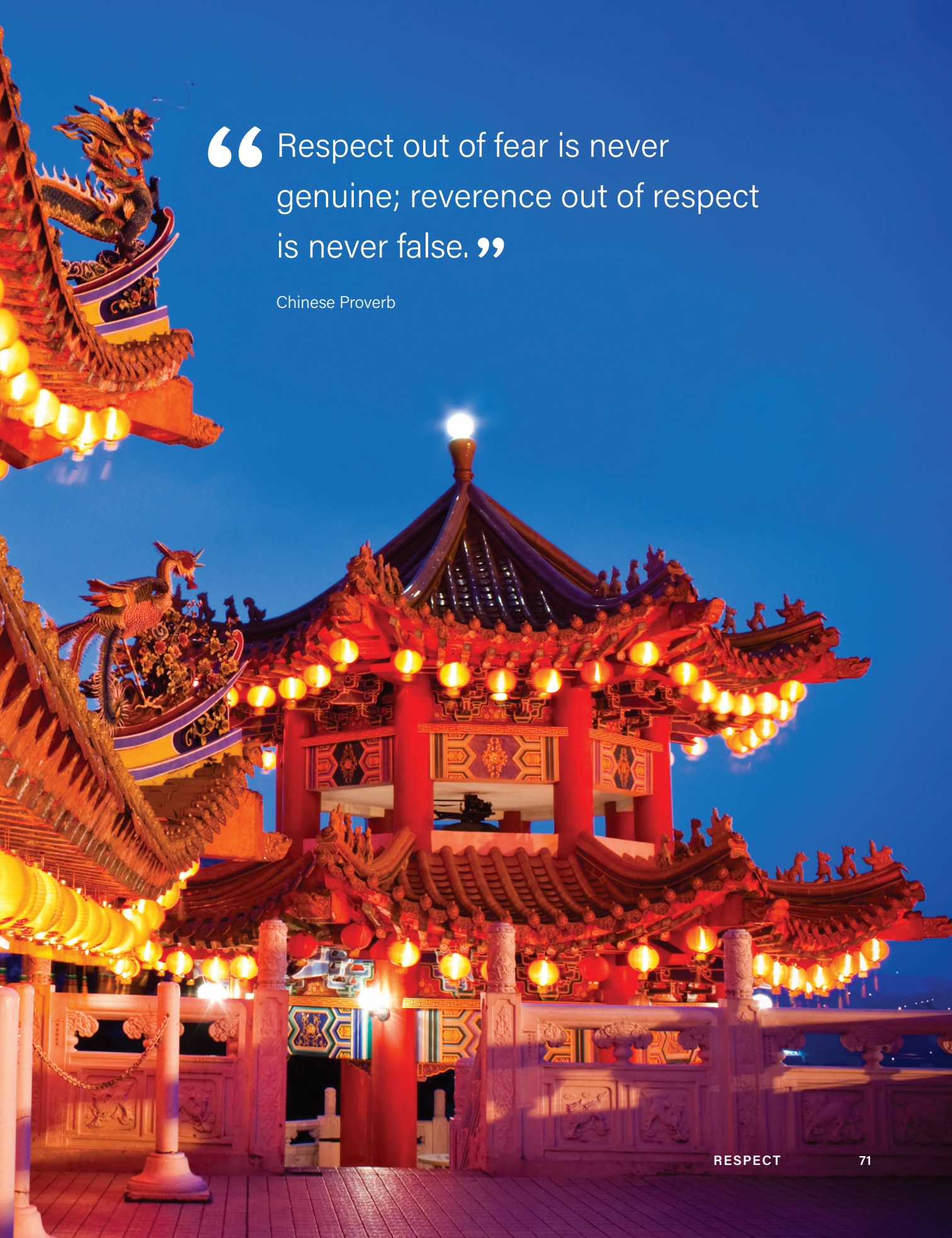
At the institutional level we need to enhance respect for democracy and governance by institutionalising 'town hall' meetings; introducing two-term premierships (to avoid tendency towards autocracy and corruption); establishing channels of communication, via e-democracy, between citizens and politicians; and initiating accountability and quality audits in ministries. To set ourselves up for success on this front we must ensure that all staff in all ministries and government institutions, businesses and corporations are fully aware of respectful policy and are committed to implementing it. To address the deficit of respect throughout our institutions, a respect audit will be initiated and a report of recommendations will be made available to all ministries and government agencies. Concluding from the audits and reviews undertaken, we need to ensure that there are regulations and codes of respectful practice that institutions and organisations have to follow. These new policies, derived from a respect of preference and needs of the workers, should encourage flexible working conditions through reformative consideration of Work From Home allowance, staggering working hours, holiday/leave allowance, mental and physical health needs, and diversity, family, and religious considerations. To judge our success in these endeavours' delivery of a respectful Malaysia, it is necessary to create public bodies. Their task will be to oversee and promote respectful practices generally while, more specifically, implementing the creation of chief executive positions within ministries as well as public and private entities entrusted with promoting and innovating more respectful practices.

## Educational

The educational system of any nation is often the frontline for building societal cohesion and respect amongst its people. It will be imperative to introduce the notion of respect into education and practice at primary and secondary levels – with a focus on respectful use of social media and new technologies. A new curriculum that teaches respect for nature and the environment at all levels and emphasises the shared history and interconnections between different Malaysian communities will assist in this undertaking. In higher education we must promote research on the concept of respect in the different religious traditions and histories of Malaysia. Beyond what can be done in the classroom, our government must launch public service campaigns to disseminate the refined definition of respect. As respect requires going out and meeting and knowing others, we need to establish more educational exchange and study abroad programmes within Malaysia, across the ASEAN/Pacific region, and around the globe. By increasing Malaysian literacy in Malay and English while broadening skills and development in our other language traditions such as Mandarin, Tamil, as well as regional and indigenous languages and dialects we equip our people with the most sophisticated means of communication which begins the journey towards broadening our respect for our fellow human beings. To ready ourselves for the future, we must anticipate and prepare for educational innovations necessary to make Malaysian students proficient in contemporary developments without losing their traditional values and globally competitive so that they can be well equipped to establish ties of respect in a variety of fields and locations.

## Social

The arena of society will be the most critical area for making a more respectful Malaysia. We need to involve civil society, social media, and conventional media in promoting Malaysian respect. We must also create programmes to provide safe public spaces for underrepresented and disenfranchised individuals and communities while also encouraging communities to promote their contributions and understandings of a respectful Malaysia. To activate the next generation we must launch youth volunteer service initiatives (environmental and community cleaning, conservation work, care for the elderly and ill, etc.) to teach respect based in equality and recognition of the planet and humanity, and incubate youth initiatives for innovative respectful activities. To build social cohesion we must endorse community exchanges, joint projects, festivals, and initiatives that build respect



“ Respect out of fear is never genuine; reverence out of respect is never false. ”

Chinese Proverb

between Malaysia's many communities. The government needs to also promote professional advocacy for respectful practices in work, at home, and in society at large and to do this, we must lead by example through a government shift towards respectful practices and policies.

## Cultural

While mutual respect is embedded within the varied cultures that comprise Malaysia, we must continue to evolve a culture and language of respect – equality, diversity, multiculturalism, inclusivity, empowerment, looking after neighbourhoods, cleaning initiatives, and other promotional grassroots efforts dedicated to sustainability. To remain forward thinking, we need to also prepare for and welcomingly embrace incoming and emerging cultural practices that will need to be integrated into our respect policies. We must all do our part to sponsor respect as a unifier and bridge building mechanism between the diverse communities that comprise Malaysia. Encouraged cultural conscious shifts from progress rooted in unfettered development, to progress rooted in a respectful balance of restoring traditional spaces, will help us to rediscover lost spaces, and innovate a sustainable development of new spaces and traditions that keep old wisdoms alive. Generally, this requires us to promote modest lifestyles and steer society towards humility. The government must promote and provide facilities for respectful tourism. Together, we the people, must act as a supreme symbol of respect and through example and effective communication demonstrate our new concept of respect at work in Malaysian society.

## Urban

Our urban centres, which have embodied and been somewhat colonised by global trends in urbanism and capitalist urban culture, have great strides ahead in making for a more respectful Malaysia. To change things, we need to incentivise and provide infrastructure for shared public spaces, gardens, parks, and spaces that bring communities together in general respectful coexistence. Concurrently we should incentivise the evolution of indigenous architecture and use of local products to enhance the rich concern for respect in multicultural Malaysia. To see this out we must increase the capacity of citizens for participatory, integrated, and respectful human settlement planning and management. Endorsing respect in technological and sustainable developments encourages greater order and peaceful coexistence.

We should be continually exploring new ways to bring respect to densely populated and compact spaces. One idea as to how to do this is to encourage respect checks to demonstrate Malaysia's approach of respect towards modernity, 24/7 hustle and bustle, and life in advanced, developed, and capitalist society.

“ The Prophet saw Sa'd performing his ablutions. 'What is this extravagance!', he exclaimed. 'Can there be extravagance even in ablutions?', Sa'd asked. The Prophet replied: 'Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river.' ”

Ibn Majah

## Rural

While respect has greatly depreciated in urban centres, respect for the rural heartland is almost non-existent. We need to protect rural areas from developments and appropriations that infringe upon their right to respect and their way of life. Through the introduction of agriculture and farming practices that take advantage of new methods for irrigation, crop rotation, and alternative sources of energy we begin to repair the lost trust. Concurrent to this we need to negotiate and establish a better farm-to-table process that maintains respect for all those involved in feeding Malaysians. We continue this process by developing rural communities that are empowered to participate in making a respectful Malaysia while encouraging rural communities to anticipate change and acquire necessary skills and training in emerging technologies. The government must find ways to fund rural projects aimed at attaining respectful goals concerning shared spaces, clean air and water, and mutual respect while also promoting the creation of centres of study to address agricultural and rural needs and provide a space for creative and innovative approaches to rural communities and practices.

## Complexity

To navigate the postnormal times we find ourselves in, we must acquire deep knowledge of the complexity involved in the introduction of respect policies through research. We also need to develop multiple complementary policies to accommodate diversity and balance small and large issues regarding respect. This can be done by developing sustainability networks that make it easy for individuals, communities, institutions, and government to communicate freely and collaborate in building a respectful Malaysia. The complex approach to respect we develop will integrate different expectations, sectors, and views reflecting the context and complexity of Malaysia.

## Contradictions

The contradictions that arise concerning respect in Malaysia have increased substantially in the last few years. We will need to develop and anticipate strategies to counter contradictions from other political elements, vested interests, big business and multinational corporations, social/cultural divisions, sectarianism, and all other efforts that could compromise respect policies. Special focus also needs to be given to researching and understanding contradictions with regard to respect in society related to ignorance around race, gender, class, and lifestyle differences in order to eliminate stereotypes and prevent xenophobia. We must encourage exploration of supposed contradictions involving respect with regards to capitalist society, modernity, development, and pluralism to find means and ways of transcending them in order to seek a better Malaysian future. A great first step towards navigating contradictions, seen and unseen, is to establish rules and regulations to ensure an effective interface between community policies to deal with tensions and divergences, and resolve conflicts of interests.

## Chaos

To prevent overabundant chaotic events from disrupting the implementation of respect policies in Malaysia we must act now. First, we need to make robust efforts to detect emerging issues and assess their chaotic potential. By navigating the reduction of unnecessary complications that give rise to chaotic opportunities, we can curb disrespect and hate speech in politics, governance, education, and other societal arenas. We should also continue to study and monitor phenomenon – such as social media, ‘influencers’, reality tv, celebrity culture, racist AI, and fake news –

that could promote disrespectful tensions in Malaysia. We need to also continually assess the shifting complex diversity of Malaysia to avoid chaotic events that could cripple the nation and its unity.

## Simultaneity

The success of respect policies will depend highly on our ability to cope with contemporary simultaneity. To do this we must ensure that respect policies are adopted and consistently implemented across all government ministries, public bodies, businesses, corporations, and other institutions. We can complement this effort by endorsing respectful thinking as a balancing principle capable of assisting with the resolution of multiple situations simultaneously. Ultimately we need to promote a respectful Malaysia as the model for both diverse, plural coexistence and peaceful moderation of simultaneous events, crises, and developments.

## Futures/Change

To preserve respect policies into the long term, several steps will be needed to gear our thinking towards the future. We need to be continually examining social and cultural trends and emerging issues which could disrupt respect policies and lead to social upheaval. While doing this we also need to consider how emerging technologies and social developments may disrupt physical, economic, communal, and cultural environments, and thus undermine and/or derail respect policies. A critical factor in this endeavour requires us to consider the potential implications of an aging population. Likewise, we must embrace respect policies as a critical reiteration for reform and recovery following the trauma of the Covid-19 pandemic and recent, subsequent crises. The overall objectives of the futures work needing to be done is to evolve a culture of adaptability in policy implementation that allows for continual evaluation of law and enables prompt correction in the case of error or unintended consequence. To set these initiatives on a good footing we must establish respect policies as a social forgiveness for past wrongs in the interest of moving on and pursuing better futures.

“ It is true that there are those among us who have different ideas and understandings as well as those who come from different social standings and positions, but the essence of our purpose and meaning is only one, which is that we want to raise and preserve the dignity and decency of our nation. ”

Onn Jaafar, the 7<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Johor

## Monitoring

To strengthen our sense of respect across Malaysia we need to develop systems to monitor the delivery of respect policies, track progress on various levels, receive feedback, and influence relevant change in policies when needed. This will require a difficult balancing act of monitoring bodies to respect free speech while cracking down on hate speech and actions of disrespect to develop a society capable of respectful disagreement, polylogue, and that embodies the true spirit of democracy. We need to be willing to revise policies when dictated by emerging issues. Our feedback and follow-up is heavily dependent on our developing greater means of communication that are received and taken into consideration by the government while maintaining transparency with the general public.

## Enabling Institutions

To build a more Respectful Malaysia that embodies our definitions, policy imperatives and targets, and accounts for the postnormal elements at play, the following policies provide us a point of initiation for our journey.

We will start by ensuring each government ministry integrates, consolidates, or reorients the relevant offices to establish a system that promptly addresses public grievance and answers questions raised consistently. Alongside this policy we will establish a nationwide e-system through which the public can raise questions and issues directly with those in positions of power – overall bolstering an ecosystem of openness and accountability. Furthermore, we will introduce codes of conduct aimed at fostering objective and balanced media coverage, particularly during elections, and an open and safe environment for watchdogs, with a particular focus on social media platforms.

We will enable nationwide Wi-Fi access and technology equity initiatives, partnering with the tech and telecom sectors as well as other entities with vested interest in activating the empowerment and agency that comes with such access. To further bridge our communities, we will establish cultural hubs for senior citizens in major cities, connecting peoples across Malaysia's richly diverse areas.

To promote democratic participation, we will make sure public holidays are declared for national and state elections. By creating inclusive citizen's networks, we hope to promote respect in our society. Overall, we will continue the active pursuit of a new age of politics and discourse grounded in mutual respect and reform for the betterment of Malaysia, its people and the nation. In this spirit, the policies listed here provide us a launchpad for your suggestions and discussions that will be vital to adapting and proposing further actions we will take together to build a respectful Malaysia.

S C R I P T

Innovation



# Innovation

## Conventional Definition

Innovation is commonly known as a new idea, product, or novel process that makes a prior concept or operation more efficient or enhances a potential aspect left untapped. Innovation is more than simple change for the sake of change, instead it must provide a valued improvement to a given system. Nowadays, it is often connected to new technology and digital augmentation or evolution.

## Our Definition

The Malay language provides us with a number of words for innovation: *pembaharuan*, *pengenalan*, *rekacipta* and *reka baru*. The idea of conscious design is central to these terms. *Reka* can be translated as a creative action, composition, or attentive design. Design presupposes two important concepts. First: there is an intention and planned out process. Second: creativity is at the heart of this endeavour. As a driver of Malaysian society, innovation is a continuous and evolutionary process that embraces and empowers the creativity of the citizenry. An innovative Malaysia provides an environment for fostering creativity with an infrastructure that can support the creation of better systems, products, ideas, and processes. It is about taking stock in what Malaysia has at the present and exploring what can be improved upon or done better in the future. Coupled with sustainability, care and compassion, and respect – a deliberative and ethical framework – a culture of innovation can release the dynamic potential of Malaysian society and shape a more desirable future.

## Vision for Innovation

Our goal is to build a culture of innovation within Malaysian society and take the nation from being primary consumers of to being active contributors to the digital and technological revolutions that are changing the globe.

“ Leaders are susceptible to entrained thinking, a conditioned response that occurs when people are blind to new ways of thinking by the perspective they acquired through past experiences, training, and success. ”

David J Snowden and Mary E Boone, 'A Leaders' Framework for Decision Making' p2

## Target Population/Areas

Policy for making an Innovative Malaysia must build an ecosystem that fosters creative processes. This begins with a focus on our educational institutions. We must also pay particular attention to urban and rural youth, especially the youth of the rural heartland. Policy will also need to target entrepreneurs of all background and locales, tapping into the entrepreneurial spirit of Malaysia, as well as start-ups, corporations, civil engineers, and the relevant government ministries. As is the nature of innovation, these targets will naturally evolve as we progress towards building an innovative Malaysia

## Policy Imperatives

Policies aimed at creating an innovative Malaysia work synergistically with the other drivers of SCRIPT by utilising the creative potential of each citizen. The creation of a culture of innovation requires synchronous efforts of various institutions, communities, and individuals in all sectors and from a wide variety of backgrounds. The emphasis should be on practical innovation that is not new simply for the sake of being new.

“ In what we term a “print-based-industrial society’, the professions have played a central role in the sharing of expertise. They have been the main channel through which individuals and organisations have gained access to certain kinds of knowledge and experience. However, in a “technology-based Internet society”, we predict that increasingly capable machines, operating on their own or with non-specialist users, will take on many of the tasks that have been the historic preserve of the professions. We anticipate an “incremental transformation’ in the way we produce and distribute expertise in society. This will lead eventually to a dismantling of the traditional professions. ”

Richard Susskind and Daniel Susskind, *The Future of the Professions*, p2.

## Economic/Financial

One of the key suppressants of innovation in a society is found in the limitations present in the denial of economic and financial support. Therefore, we must develop a new economic and financial agenda with innovation at its core. To maintain economic stability when faced with the risks and challenges that underlie creating a more innovative Malaysia, we also need to introduce a tax system that rewards creativity and innovation, but that also safeguards against the abuse of innovative practices and promotes smooth transitions for society. This must be reinforced with abolishing tax concessions and incentives that allow businesses and enterprises to pursue unbridled innovation with ill-regard of human dignity. To give empowerment to the Malaysian entrepreneurial spirit we need to promote the innovation of banking and finance, particularly microfinance, through mobile and app-based banking structures while also encouraging economic and financial innovations that promote Islamic banking and finance principles along with greater transparency and accountability. The government must also provide funding, grants, and scholarships for developing innovative approaches to economics and business practices while developing targets and goals for them. The government will take the lead on making an innovative Malaysia by incorporating innovation into procurement strategies, redevelopment, and projects. Substantial efforts and cooperation need to go into developing and funding programmes that network, empower, and grant opportunity to initiatives, communities, and enterprises, especially targeted at youth, designed to nudge creativity and innovation. We must also establish a fund to provide insurance and security for risks involved in innovative pursuits and to fill in for other costs we need to promote crowdfunding of novel ideas, social innovations, and emerging professions.

## Legal

Innovation both needs to be enabled through the updating of our legal system and be embraced as a driver for advancing our codes and laws for the futures ahead. To begin, we must integrate innovation into present laws, amending where necessary impediments to creativity and innovation within Malaysia. With a focus on innovation we must conduct legislative reviews in order to reduce redundancy and update the flow of the law-making and executing process. Throughout this process we must also explore legislation that provides a safety net for risks taken in the name of an innovative Malaysia. Looking towards the future we also need to be exploring legal rights and protections for the products of innovative practices, bearing in mind

the rise of automation, autonomous robotic systems (E-Commerce and Logistics, Self-Driving Vehicles, etc.), service robots (malpractice therein), and AI penetration within society. Beyond the adjustments for technological advancements, we also need to implement innovative approaches to problems we have been plagued with for a long time now, such as judicial independence and reform of the justice system in Malaysia.

## Institutional

Malaysia's institutions can and should set the standard for promulgating innovation throughout society. We must establish a network of technology incubators and hubs across the country to generate and promote digital enterprises as well as a network of art and craft cooperatives throughout Malaysia. We also need to launch a variety of youth centric innovation centres and initiatives. A semi-government body will be set up to provide finance and other support to start-up companies with the hopes of giving rise to more unicorn companies in Malaysia. As we build innovative positivity into our institutions we should also explore ways and means to promote innovative thinking in government bureaucracy and civil service. Finally, to safeguard the innovative spirit in Malaysia's institutions, we must create regulations and oversight to assist with innovative transitions so that the whole of society can be taken together into new futures.

## Educational

Innovation is the key to saving Malaysia's lagging and ossified educational ecosystem. We begin by reforming out of date educational dogma. While taking on this substantial reform, we can introduce computer literacy and coding from primary and secondary levels; promote after school code clubs; and provoke stronger cooperation between computer sciences and creative and liberal arts. We also need to be exploring innovative approaches to higher education based on multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives, that incorporates and promotes critical thinking, futures literacy, and sustainability. These endeavours should also seek to enhance our Islamic values and strong tradition of ethical and critical thinking. We will also introduce interdisciplinary degrees with a focus on innovation in universities. Outside traditional universities, we need to create technology colleges in rural areas that provide vocational courses with apprenticeships. By establishing research centres focussed on specific areas, such as governance innovation, social

innovation, and innovation in business practices; and study innovative approaches to contemporary problems such as climate change, refugees, and sustainability we can revolutionise our knowledge building capacity and the societal reach of our education system. We must also promote research on the emerging notion of 'communal innovation'. We must empower all in society to awaken their innovative spirit by encouraging new community endeavours, extracurricular programmes, online programmes, and degree/certification courses that embody the innovative spirit in Malaysia and imprint it upon a variety of fields of study and interest. Innovation should drive the societal trend of seeing education as a lifetime vocation.

## Social

We need to involve civil society, social media, conventional media, and individuals in promoting creativity and innovation through public services and initiatives. To carry this out we must push innovative campaigns to deal with social problems such as drug addiction, homelessness, unfair labour conditions, and involve youth in green projects (e.g. anti-plastic, recycling, clean-up, alternative energy projects). To ensure our innovative spirit is optimised for uplifting Malaysian society, we need to encourage the development of innovative apps and other projects designed to alleviate social issues while also promoting professional advocacy for innovation. To give a long-lasting breadth to innovative Malaysia, we must endorse feedback channels to engage the people in detecting needed innovation (innovation often begins with a complaint about an inefficient or asinine process). To set this societal endeavour off on the right foot, the government must lead by example through government demonstration of innovation in practice.

## Cultural

While innovation is commonly associated with new ideas in the context of our present digital revolution, our multiple Malaysian cultures embody the deeper, more primordial sentiments for the innovative spirit that resides within our people. To awaken any dormancies to this spirit, we must continue to evolve a culture and language of innovation by involving young people in technology hubs, prototype labs with access to emerging technologies such as robotics and 3D printers, and by promoting arts and crafts with innovative edge. The government must sponsor innovation as a unifier and bridge building mechanism between the diverse communities that comprise Malaysia. Necessary nudging should be incorporated

“ New forces are transforming higher education at a speed that could not have been foreseen 10 years ago... Higher education institutions play a strategic role in finding solutions to today’s leading challenges in the fields of health, science, education, renewable energy, water management, food security and the environment... We need higher education institutions to train teachers in the conduct of pedagogical research and develop relevant curricula that integrates the values of sustainable development. ”

Walter Erdelen, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO,  
'Plenary Session 1 – Trends in Global Higher Education'



into incentivising and providing infrastructure for innovation. We must reiterate that we promote innovation that calls for a more sustainable, respectful lifestyle dedicated to care and compassion in Malaysia to steer culture away from rampant consumerism. We must also promote and provide innovative approaches to tourism that embraces the rich history of Malaysian culture and provides a gateway towards a more innovative future for the nation while also limiting impact on historical sites and the environment. To solidify Malaysia's innovative culture, we can launch incentive programmes and awards to promote innovative thinking and reward innovative thought with funding and backing. Promotion of innovation needs to be taken to the next level through encouraged media outlets such as periodicals, blogs, social innovation websites, and apps that focus on innovative solutions to social problems.

## Urban

Our urban centres can reach their pinnacle optimisation through seeking new ways to provoke innovation in Malaysia. We need to promote innovative evolution in civic design and infrastructure of Malaysia's urban centres. Through the introduction of flatpack housing, community volunteer renovation/house building projects, and other quick, sustainable, and humane housing projects we will gain an edge on potential solutions to the affordable and sustainable housing needs throughout Malaysia. Innovative approaches will be critical to developing pedestrianism, mass transit utilisation, and optimisation within cities. We need to develop better pedestrian, car and motorbike free zones. We must encourage community and citizen driven efforts to clean up green spaces and water ways for public use and increased tourism. Amid those undertakings, we will explore road and carpark innovations that collect rainwater to assist with minimising flood impacts while also securing water storage for agricultural use and in times of draught or water shortage. To ground our thinking on this, we must look at such innovations as the SMART Tunnel in Kuala Lumpur, learning from the flaws of such endeavours and improving upon any shortcomings. Wasted and underutilised spaces can also be re-established as multi-sector innovation hubs in major cities. Eventually we can launch a scheme to make malls, buildings, apartment complexes, and other structures and neighbourhoods energy self-sufficient through a five or ten year plan that introduces local solar and wind energy innovations. Looking to the not-so-distant future, we need to be creating infrastructure for the arrival of electric cars and self-driving vehicles. Further into the future, we should explore ways to utilise

empty buildings for use as batteries for collecting and storing energy. We can also turn unused or underused malls into 'tech cities' which provide facilities for start-ups, accelerators and incubators, helping innovate enterprises to move up with legal and financial advice and support, connecting talent with firms and businesses that require their expertise, and providing social activities and networking opportunities for connecting and learning.

## Rural

Where, at first glance, innovation may appear to be antagonistic to rural spaces and lifestyles, quite the contrary, innovation can ensure the survival and flourishing of rural spaces. We must begin by identifying and supporting existing rural innovative initiatives. We need to establish centres for educating farmers in new methods for irrigation, crop rotation, and alternative sources of energy. The development of flatpack housing should also be utilised in rural areas but using Malay architecture and building techniques and materials. While we need to rethink rural development, we must also seek data-driven development programmes for rural communities. To empower residents in rural areas we must create a digital economy ecosystem by providing high speed fibre, mobile services and free Wi-Fi for deprived areas. We need to also promote innovative approaches to delivering everyday needs readily available in urban centres (transport, shopping, take-away meals), without encroaching upon the integrity of rural areas. As we think more on the future of rural areas, we need to be exploring low impact tourism opportunities and innovations for rural areas. Launching community centred initiatives need to be directed at making rural areas energy self-sufficient through the use of localised solar and wind energy collection units. The government must endorse community led efforts to innovate kampongs and rural communities making their homes and buildings sustainable and in line with custom and comfort. The philosophy behind these policies is to live with nature. This is carried out through the incorporation of rainwater collection tanks, to mitigate flood damage and supply the community when in need; and also through the delivery of internet access and digital technologies, and thus the agency that comes with it, in a manner that does not disrupt the community or encroach upon the desired rural setting.

“ The capital city’s mass media tell of a higher gross national product and higher per capita income, but not enough about increasing gaps between the highest and lowest groups, of more cars, but not enough about less public transport; of more industry, but not enough about even more pollution, a dismal record of road and industrial accidents, dishonesty in the marketplace, drugs galore, both mind-changing and pocket-fleeing, and conspicuous consumption at all levels. All these are symptomatic of a kind of growth that bothers many of us. We are told it is the joy and price of progress – but if the joy of progress is for a small number, the price paid and pain suffered by many others bother us even more. ”

*Anwar Fazal, Our Cities, Our Homes, p3*

## Complexity

Getting innovation right in Malaysia will require a careful navigation of postnormal times, beginning with taking careful stock of complexity. We will have to prepare for the increase in complexity generated by innovative practices while also developing multiple complementary approaches to accommodate diversity, balance rural and urban areas, economic and legal issues, and social and financial concerns, while promoting an innovative culture. To better cope with this increased complexity, we need to develop digital networks that make it easy for individuals, communities, institutions, and governments to communicate freely and collaborate in building an innovative culture. We must encourage education in complexity to prepare an innovative Malaysia for a variety of pitfalls that will come with the transition into the digital age.

## Contradictions

Innovation in and of itself is rife with contradictions, so in laying out an innovative Malaysia we must seek to reduce conventional contradictions imposed by old and out-of-date practices and approaches while also developing and anticipating strategies to overcome resistance to innovative policies from various quarters. It is important for us to establish rules and regulations to ensure an effective interface between different sectors to resolve potential tensions and conflicts of interests. It is essential that we maintain a community centric and individual empowerment focus towards an innovative Malaysia to ensure innovation is achieved with purpose and preferences of the community, while avoiding conflicts between innovation and lifestyle.

## Chaos

While chaos can be a critical ignition of necessary innovations, we must not let chaos dictate the changes we wish to implement. We must ensure that emerging Malaysian innovations do not lead to social or cultural commotion with potential to produce chaotic events. We need to adopt the practice of continually assessing the possible disruptions and chaotic potential of emerging technologies, including: Internet of Things, Machine learning, AI and Robotics, Automation of Knowledge, 3D Printing, Genomics and Genetic Engineering, Block Chain, Cryptocurrencies, Big Data, Virtual and Augmented Reality, Prescriptive Analytics, Seamless Remote Presence, Universal Digital Identities, Nanodevices, Bioprinting and Management by AI. We must also

optimise the tracking and progression of chaotic events to seek out opportunities needed for navigating innovation in Malaysia.

## Simultaneity

Innovation will give us an advantage in a world of increasingly simultaneous events, yet the embodiment of working with simultaneity must occur across all levels and divisions. To make sure we are not undermining simultaneity, we need to confirm that relevant innovative issues are addressed at all levels, that there are bespoke policies for rural and urban areas, youth and seniors, there is equal and concurrent emphasis on present and future concerns, and positive feedback is carefully monitored. It will be critical to balance innovation and tradition through the optimisation of technology (particularly knowing when to use it and when it is not necessary to use). We must foster the innovative spirit of Malaysians as a method for dealing with the simultaneity of events in our contemporary world and as a rapid-to-action reiterative process of societal evolution and development for and by the people.

## Futures/Change

The unreflective drive towards innovation can lead to a simplistic and unilateral conception of the future ahead. We must remain critical and nuanced in our approaches to change and the future. To do this, we need to be continually examining global trends and emerging issues that could lead to new technologies, and social and cultural innovations. We then must go deeper and explore second and third order (unintended) consequences of current and innovative policies, actions, and behaviours. Our reflections and analysis should consider how emerging technologies and social developments may disrupt physical, economic, communal, and cultural environments, and thus undermine and/or derail creative and innovative policies. We need to also encourage the appreciation of Malaysian history in grounding our moves towards the future to provide continuity from now to then. To keep our idea of the future plural, we need to keep developing scenarios for the futures of innovative Malaysia. Using a futures approach to policy building we can work towards building a transparent and accountable strategic plan to make Malaysia a free Wi-Fi nation in the next ten years. Throughout these innovations we must remember to heed the necessary growing pains and hurdles that will arise in the various transitions vital in building an innovative Malaysia.



## Monitoring

To prevent innovation from running potentially counterintuitive to the prospects of this framework, our monitoring must always be prioritised to improve our reiterations. We need to develop systems to monitor the delivery of innovation, track progress on various levels, receive feedback, and influence relevant change in policies when required. We must also identify and manage critical sectoral interactions between the economic, legal, institutional, social, cultural, urban, and rural spheres. We must get into the practice of revising policies and introduce new ones when dictated by emerging issues. Monitoring positive feedback will ensure we are not led down a path toward exacerbated chaotic events. We must also devise ways to simultaneously track progress in Malaysia while looking to what is going on in the outside world to see what gaps Malaysia retains and what gaps in the world Malaysians could be particularly suited to fill.

## Enabling Institutions

The following policies take into account the definition of the Innovative Malaysia we seek, along with our policy imperatives and targets, and the postnormal dimension of the issues we face on this front to give us a launchpad towards the change we desire.

First, we will review, consolidate, and integrate the present, relevant positions, offices, task forces, and committees charged with the mandate to promote innovative culture. We will also establish Rural Innovation Development Centres beginning in the appropriate areas with the greatest need. We will also review and plan a reinvigoration of the Cyberjaya project, bring in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and assemble a solid strategic plan, aiming for it to become a technological capital of Southeast Asia. To broaden our knowledge and enhance Malaysia's edge in this, we will appoint and launch a research delegation to travel to key global centres of innovation and find new ways to innovate Malaysia and build innovative relationships with other nations.

At home we will launch major tax incentives and budget overhauls to reward innovation and kick off the first wave of an innovative Malaysia. And to kickstart the work ahead, we will outline broad sweeping policy mandates concerning a Green New Deal, Energy Security and Transition, and the Transition to an Innovative Malaysia.

In the spirit of collaboration, we hope that you will take these base policy suggestions and help us navigate our way through yet-unconsidered policies towards a more innovative Malaysia.



“ Wealth does not come from wealth  
but from many wealthy people. ”

Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, the 17th Chief Minister of Kelantan

S C R I P T

Prosperity



# Prosperity

## Conventional Definition

Prosperity, simply put, is the condition of the good life. It is often associated with financial affluence and success as well as comfort and security in one's wellbeing. Prosperity is a qualitatively relative term. The penultimate achievement earned through hard work and struggle. It is a highly subjective state of being that is based on fortune and even luck that can be highly dependent on the time, place, and culture of the prosperous. Conventional definitions of prosperity also have a sense of reaching a point beyond concern. Thus, to be prosperous is to be in a state without worry about money or material needs.

## Our Definition

The Malay term for prosperity, *kesejahteraan*, has no English equivalent. *Sejahtera* is equivalent to wellbeing; or more appropriately complete holistic wellbeing. The Malay conception of prosperity also draws on the historical tradition carried through the Islamic concept of *falah* – success, happiness and well-being which comes from spiritual fulfilment and self-improvement by following the commands of God. In Malaysia, the pursuit of prosperity must involve sustainable attitudes, embody care and compassion as well as respect for all others, and material growth ought to be balanced with spiritual fulfilment while encouraging continued innovation. It must be a society wide state that is a continuous goal for all citizens, the present as well as future generations, as much in the best of times as in the worst. Malaysian prosperity is progressive where community and individual growth and economic ascension can occur simultaneously without being at the expense of the other.

## Vision for Prosperity

Our objective is to create a prosperous Malaysia through balanced and sustainable economic growth, empowerment, and inclusivity of the citizenry, and due regard for the spiritual, holistic wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the nation.

## Target Population/Areas

In building policy to create the prosperous Malaysia we are talking about here, we must target the whole Malaysian nation in all its rich diversity and multiculturalism.

## Policy Imperatives

The delivery of an inclusive, prosperous Malaysia is a continuously reiterative process that involves the participation and input of all elements of society. Prosperity is a synthesis of sustainability, care and compassion, respect, and innovation that must take to heart the diversity and complexity of society. Prosperous policy should not only progress and elevate the present situation of Malaysia but seek to set a global standard for the wellbeing of society and its citizens.

“ While prosperity is the traditional concern of economists, the “inclusive” modifier demands both that we consider the whole distribution of outcomes, not simply the average, and that we consider prosperity broadly, including non-pecuniary sources of well-being, from health to climate change to political rights. ”

*Economics for Inclusive Prosperity, Economics for Inclusive Prosperity, p1*

## Economic/Financial

The prosperity discussed here does not come by way of throwing vast sums of money at the problem, but instead through revised thinking of some of our foundational economic principles. We need a new ethics for economic thought that strives for Malaysian prosperity among the other SCRIPT drivers. In so doing we need to promote the development of economic clusters that comply with SCRIPT principles. We can begin by strengthening the Khazanah Nasional Berhad by applying a SCRIPT perspective to that model. We will also need to research and study Industry 4.0 and other critical economic theories around transformation and good capitalism, embracing the components most suitable for prosperity in Malaysia. Taking from the new knowledge garnered, we must develop new funds and approaches to soften future economic crises and resolve present, pending crises – a Pathway to Prosperity Plan. This new system will balance loan deferments, cancellation of debts, and salary subsidies. It must also work to replenish Employee Provident Fund (EPF) depletions as a result of Covid-19 and its second order effects while safeguarding pensions in the occurrence of a future financial crisis. This new system will also need to expedite Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) loan applications and upward-bound start-up funds. To account for costs we will introduce a tax system that allows for all citizens to gain access to prosperity and does away with rampant growth and wealth accumulated at the expense of others, that cuts down economic disparities, and redirections tax revenues towards social goods and the people's benefit. Coupled with this new system, a long overdue overhaul of the fines and fees scheme will seek to syphon the collections from legal violations into education, social security, and healthcare. A major policy push will be to abolish tolls for B40s (providing them with 'Toll Pass'), while fairly regulating the toll for M40s and T20s, making sure the funds collected go back into societal and road improvements and eliminating as many tolls as possible. We must establish more security and safety net funds in the event of natural disaster and unexpected economic uncertainty such as what has been experience in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. In a strike against poverty, we need to abolish repayment to the National Higher Education Fund Corporation for the B40s. We also must incentivise cooperation and initiative to support the prosperity of the community and citizens. In order to have an equal economic and financial distribution of prosperity policies we need to promote positive economic links between urban and rural areas – supporting developing technology markets. And to prepare for other future markets we must establish Malaysia as a regional e-commerce logistic hub (examine the potential of establishing a regional Amazon/Ali Baba in Malaysia).



“ The findings of the study indicate that the Orang Asli are likely to be poor if they live in environmentally sensitive and protected areas as compared to families under the new resettlement scheme. Inadequate access to basic education and employment contributed significantly to their poor economic status. The findings further reveal that the community is facing difficulties in receiving access and support in terms of basic needs such as housing, education, economic livelihood, and other social infrastructure. Moreover, the regulatory structure for the management of watershed areas as well as the emphasis for commodity crops such as palm oil and natural rubber have indirectly contributed towards poverty and inequality among the *Orang Asli*. ”

Fatimah Kari et al, "Poverty within watershed and environmentally protected areas: the case of the indigenous community in Peninsular Malaysia" *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, 188:173

## Legal

A delicate balancing act will be required to set the Malaysian people on the path towards prosperity. We need to first evaluate current laws and codes to improve their adherence to a prosperous Malaysia while also exploring what new laws will be needed with the emergence of Industry 4.0. We are long overdue on developing legal codes to safeguard workers' rights, with special emphasis on the challenges presented by automation and robot replacement. For the posterity of our legal system, we should consider introducing crimes against the future to hold responsible those who commit wrongs that threaten the environment as well as the prosperity of future generations of Malaysians. We must also continually endorse judicial independence so that prosperity can be protected and kept within reach of all by a fair and equal sense of justice in Malaysia.

## Institutional

It is essential that Malaysia's institutions embody our definition of prosperity for the betterment of the people. It is critical that our government becomes a learning entity, adjusting to change and new developments, through constant research and the use of Big Data justly acquired. Among other reforms, the creation of a futures unit within the Malaysian Department of Statistics will assist in focussing us in on monitoring key international and national trends. Developing anticipatory capacity within all administrative levels will offer instructions in developing prosperity policy and in adapting to changing circumstances. We must ensure that the diversity of Malaysia is incorporated on the boards of economic and business institutions. A major policy move will be to create a body specifically tasked with promoting corporate philanthropy. We also need to introduce a Malaysia specific Prosperity Index and a list of guidelines to retrofit institutions with the infrastructure and capacity to foster prosperity in Malaysia.

## Educational

Our educational system needs to rethink the way it forms Malaysian students so that they seek prosperity beyond myopic and single-minded pursuits of wealth. This begins with the introduction of curriculum and practice at primary and

secondary levels that supports the SCRIPT approach and framework. This new curriculum must be supported by an improved standards of Malay and English throughout the educational sector by providing appropriate infrastructure and adequately trained teachers. At all levels of education, we need our educators and scholars framing an ethical approach to individual and Malaysian prosperity. To monitor the progress of SCRIPT policy in our education system we need to introduce Quality Assessment methods and techniques across all institutions of higher learning. We must support universities in developing new and adapted, industry relevant degrees with focus on new and emerging technologies. To see this out we need to encourage universities to focus on new and emerging disciplines, including the new economy of prosperity, required to navigate uncertainty and turbulent times and make the Malaysian higher education system futures aware and futures literate. Critical development should be put into a scheme for reversing brain drain and persuading professional and skilled expatriates to return to Malaysia. To assure our student's futures we will promote STEM-related fields at secondary and tertiary levels. Ultimately, the government and our educational ministries will need to rethink Malaysian education from the SCRIPT approach towards prosperity as prosperity for Malaysia, into the future, and, most importantly, how that journey begins in the classroom.

## Social

To bring our society in as stakeholders in a prosperous Malaysia we need to begin by involving civil society, social media, and conventional media in the promotion of the new idea of Malaysian prosperity. Social wellbeing is deeply connected to healthcare welfare access and in promoting prosperity for the people, we must introduce a national healthcare assistance system, or an appropriate national health insurance scheme. In developing prosperity policy we need to tear down social divisions. To do this, we need to include intergenerational perspectives in social and economic projects as well as build shared understanding and reiterative exploration through expansive dialogues on what prosperity means to different Malaysians. One of the most critical reforms in all of SCRIPT is to reframe justice in Malaysia from the present model of justice as retribution towards a model of justice as shared prosperity.

## Cultural

Good and bad notions of prosperity are in no short supply for the many cultures that comprise Malaysia. We need to work to promote prosperity as a unifier and bridge building mechanism between the diverse communities across Malaysia. To maintain the careful balance of cultural ideas across all our diversity, we should encourage intergenerational discourse on the concept of prosperity; what it has meant in Malaysia's past, and how we can change it to better Malaysia's future. The government and the people must endeavour to change workplace culture and values towards a pursuit of our new notion of prosperity. We must also establish SCRIPT as a core cultural model that stands in antagonism to Malaysia's endemic corruption and other problematic tendencies that have pervaded our culture. To keep our culture a living one and one that will last long into the future, we need to develop intercultural dialogues based on shared values such as the pursuit of prosperity, exploring the flaws and wisdom in old ways of thinking of prosperity from the multicultural pool of sources available in Malaysia.

## Urban

Our urban spaces will be a key point of optimisation for our new idea of prosperity in Malaysia. A key starting point is in the establishment of training and apprentice schemes focussed on new and emerging technologies to grant the work force futures literacy and fluency. It is imperative to involve youth in projects that enhance their skills and competences. We also need to slow down and listen so that we can determine how urban Malaysian communities can attain the prosperity outlined in SCRIPT. A key focus of prosperity policy should be on promoting charitable and philanthropic activities that utilise wasted spaces and redundancies in order to share prosperity amongst all levels of urban society.

## Rural

While traditionally urban spaces are the place to be to have the good life, we must defy that stereotype and do all in our power to make rural and rural heartland communities communities equally accessible to our new notion of prosperity without compromising their ideals. We begin by providing support and incentive to farmers to shift from low to high productivity crops. Concurrent to this we will need to re-examine the value of agricultural subsidies, including fertiliser. This process must lead us to develop more futures-oriented practices to navigate

price fluctuations, external market variables, and inflation beyond the short-term measures that have brought on a variety of recent crises in Asia. A critical policy to remove barriers to rural prosperity comes in abolishing FELDA settlers' debts. Once lifted of that burden, we need to explore Agriculture 4.0 and identify and embrace appropriate new techniques to enhance the productivity of the agricultural sector. In an inclusive and participatory manner, the government must develop, with the rural communities, SCRIPT framed transitional future plans to bring everyone in Malaysia into the future, on equal footing, with as minimal future shock as possible.

## Complexity

A prosperous Malaysia established through the SCRIPT policy framework will assist the people in navigating postnormal times and the accompanying increasing complexity of our contemporary world. We must begin by studying and understanding the complexity involved in the shift from a conventional economy to an inclusive, sustainable, caring, and compassionate economic agenda. In this study we must come to appreciate the complexity inherent in delivering prosperity to an entire nation. These prosperity policies must inculcate complexity into the day-to-day lives of every Malaysia through educating and encouraging critical complex thinking, anticipating the consequences of unilateral actions in complex systems, and eliminating tendencies to oversimplify and recklessly speed through analysis.

## Contradictions

In distinguishing our new notions of prosperity from old stereotypes, numerous contradictions are sure to surface. In coping with this phenomenon, we must develop and anticipate strategies to counter opposition from the champions of unbridled, wealth accumulating surveillance capitalism. By anticipating the contradictions inherent in pursuing Malaysia-wide prosperity, especially those arising between different areas and between individual and nationwide prosperity. We must also be prepared for resistance to these new ideas and anticipate major corporations relocating out of Malaysia in the less than favourable scenarios. To steal success from the jaws of defeat for prosperity policies we must prepare for contradictions arising in different Malaysian communities' approaches towards prosperity policy. Beyond prosperity policy, the whole SCRIPT framework should be adopted with an appreciation of contradictions in mind, to develop a new Malaysian approach to them that goes beyond overlooking or avoiding contradictions, instead, facing them head on, and seeking transcendence of their impediments.

“ Contradictions are indeed evident in the Malaysian State, on the one hand exhibited through those institutions that promote populist appeal, while on the other through the retention of those which are distinctly authoritarian, particularly detention without trial...together these institutions operate to maintain a sophisticated and yet tight rein on the forces which might challenge political, and increasingly economic dominance. ”

Anne Munro-Kua, *Autocrats vs The People*, p5-6



## Chaos

Prosperity, being a particularly vulnerable concept to the disruption of chaotic events, will require a new way to think about chaos and Malaysia. We must anticipate the chaotic behaviour of markets and develop mechanisms to cope with uncertainty as well as anticipating and preparing ourselves for a crash in the property market or bubbling in student loan debt as well as other debts in the near future, in the event that it is too late to avoid these catastrophes. Beyond our own borders we must prepare for potential trade war and sanctions between the US and China, and between pro-Russia and pro-West states, as well as political tribulations amongst other Muslim majority societies, and their potential impact on Malaysia. Ultimately, we must build a better appreciation of chaos in Malaysia with respect to economics, climate change, politics, and nation building.

## Simultaneity

When things happen, they will happen fast and to protect Malaysian prosperity, we will need to cope with events occurring simultaneously. To get us ready for this we must confirm that relevant issues related to the attainment of prosperity are addressed at all levels – for example, climate change at the national and international levels, fiscal and legislative changes at the national level, land use at the rural level, settlement and development issues at the urban level.

## Futures/Change

Prosperity is inherently a futures centric concept and that must be embodied within the pursuits our government and our people take on. We need to inculcate futures literacy and awareness so that we can be cognisant of the emerging wide-ranging criticism of capitalism and its propensity to enhance inequality and be equipped to examine trends and emerging issues on the global economy and monitor new theories and ideas on economy and finance. In our revised thinking we need to leverage futures thinking to gain 'strategic foresight' to establish a thinking state and plan long-term prosperity. Going forward we must explore prosperity policy from the perspective of constant reiteration, so that the Malaysian definition of prosperity is allowed to evolve as times and systems change.

## Monitoring

Reform and introducing new ways of thinking will be crucial to monitoring our new Malaysian prosperity. We must begin by developing new indicators capable of measuring prosperity in a holistic manner. Through sophisticated means, we must track the development of equality throughout the nation. Cognisant of the fact that prosperity, as with many other aims of SCRIPT, has no one-size-fits-all solutions, we must explore varying degrees of prosperity within Malaysia's different and diverse communities along critical divisions to ensure equity in the delivery of prosperity to all Malaysia's people. In our innovations we need to synthesise domestic and foreign markers for prosperity and remain open to third-party and foreign audits of Malaysian performance. We also must utilise effective means of communication between the people and policy and lawmakers to keep prosperity policy reiterative and grounded in the sentiments of the people.

## Enabling Institutions

In order to take the first steps towards a more prosperous Malaysia, we will pursue the following policies.

We begin by establishing research institutions to study and promote humane economics along the lines of inclusive prosperity and other uplifting theories and ideas. We will also need to establish research centres and institutes looking into different aspects of Industry 4.0 and Agriculture 4.0. Concurrent to this we will develop a plan to implement legislation and guidelines for prosperity policy alongside the integration of the SCRIPT framework into policy making and implementation.

To address present crises and thwart future ones, we will review and integrate the relevant ministries to ensure that Food Security is properly managed and addressed, with priority, through the appropriate department or division within the government. In doing this, we will encourage each ministry to devise its own procedures and divisions for researching and implementing measures to promote the people's sustained prosperity.

In order to see out the people's, and thus, Malaysia's greater prosperity, we will seek the suggestions and inputs of the citizen to help us realise our vision of a prosperous future.



## “ **Sur-veil-lance Cap-i-tal-ism, n**

1. A new economic order that claims human experience as a free raw material for hidden commercial practices of extraction, production, and sales; 2. A parasitic economic logic in which the production of goods and services is subordinated to a new global architecture of behavioural modification; 3. A rogue mutation of capitalism marked by concentration of wealth, knowledge, and power unprecedented in human history...”

Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, before the contents page

S C R I P T

Trust



# Trust

## Conventional Definition

Trust is a strong confidence or faith in one or many to carry out a particular task or ability. Generally, trust can also refer to the characteristic of holding firm to truth and wise judgement in day-to-day life. In popular parlance, trust is antithetical to situations that require checks and balances. This has made it a particularly attractive word for use in legal lexicon to stand as a guarantee or individual credibility with regards to financial and property preservation. Considering capitalism's influence on cultural and linguistic norms, popular usage of trust often infers a transactional or currency-like value in its application. Trust, as a modern word, is undergoing a crisis against the backdrop of extreme relativism and radical ignorance which has pushed us into a post-truth era. This crisis provides an opportunity for exposing flaws and outdated sentiments with regards to what we mean when we say we trust in someone or something.

## Our Definition

The turbulence of the first couple decades of the twenty-first century has exhausted our trust, particularly in our government, and eroded our hope that we could ever transcend the cycle of kleptocratic feudalism. But we must not give up on an essential driving principle for the advancement of our democracy. The Malay word for trust, also a borrowed word from Arabic, *amanah* is a vow of earthly, divine, and spiritual moral responsibility – the backbone that has upheld order in numerous societies throughout history and maintained one of the earliest mega trade networks, the Silk Road. *Amanah* is also the basis for free will in Islamic tradition. The Malay language also has two other words that help us to unpack the meaning of trust we want to reignite in Malaysia. First, *kepercayaan*, which translates approximately to faith, and *pertanggungjawaban*, which adds the principle of



“ Trust in Allah,  
but tie your camel. ”

Prophet Muhammad (al-Tirmidhi)

reciprocity to our overall meaning – we are not only morally responsible for building trust, but honouring the trust put in us. In Malaysia, trust is serious business. Trust is about more than just preserving our own individual reputations, but critical to the daily functions of societies, from business (both domestic and foreign) to living with and for each other. Without it, the centre will not hold, and we are all too familiar with a world ground to a grinding halt. The trust we need rebuilds bridges burned or left to decay and transcends the barriers and hurdles that have arisen within our society throughout our history.

## Vision for Trust

We commit to restoring and dignifying trust within Malaysian society in order to, in effect, redevelop, and fortify our national cohesion - between the government and the people as well as amongst individuals, families, communities, and all organisations that share our territories – which serves the cornerstone for building better futures in Malaysia.

## Target Populations/Areas

To create policy that rebuilds trust in Malaysia it is critical to target individuals who have become disenchanted with the current state of affairs. Trust policies must focus on the people as well as the government and its ministries. But beyond the national/individual dichotomy, our policy must also target individual national and state representatives, local community leaders, as well as urban and rural heartland communities. It will also be important to craft policies for business leaders that focus on domestic as well as international businesses – from the multinational to the small, local mom and pop shops. As we build trust within Malaysia, it is also essential to focus on building trust with our regional and global neighbours.

## Policy Imperatives

The days of wait-and-see policy sealed with the empty promise of 'trust us' are over. For a government to ask for the trust of its people diminishes all confidence that remains along with all that is requested in the asking. Trust is a value best increased through demonstrable action. Trust policies do not ask for faith or attempt to buy it, they give confidence to the people and amongst one another in Malaysian society. Trust policies are therefore the punctuation of sustainable, caring

and compassionate, respectful, innovative, and prosperity strategies. Policies that restore trust produce a more direct system of democracy where lawmakers become enablers for the rich ideas and expansive abilities of the people, guaranteeing that new and progressive ideas will be actualised and sustained into the futures we build together.

“ There’s no art.  
To find the mind’s construction in the face;  
He was a gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust. ”

*Shakespeare, Macbeth 1. iv, 11*

## Economic/Financial

Malaysian trust has taken on a great deficit from the economic and financial sectors, but in these sectors is a profound opportunity for redemption. We must begin by promoting a business culture that encourages greater trust within Malaysia while standing against corruption and the discrimination that has given rise to inequalities in the workplace and throughout society. This will require us to restructure tax supplements in order to remove those that have diminished trust within Malaysian economic networks and international markets and support those that encourage trust in our economy and investment from outside. It will be crucial to excise instances of corruption within such social programmes as Tabang Haji so that the base model can be lifted up for developing emergency security funds for victims of unexpected hardship in a variety of areas. We must design a radical programme for resolving the debt crisis in Malaysia (household debt, student loan debt, etc.) by working with Bank Negara and the financial core of our nation to determine necessary moratoriums and the cancelling of extraneous incurred debts – especially focused on debts relating to natural disasters, the Covid-19 Pandemic, and Movement Control Order (MCO) – while also looking to mitigate our national debts so that we can successfully navigate future crises. The mountainous burden of the task ahead will demand that we partner with the judicial system to resolve high financial crimes left in limbo and to make sure wrong doers pay back what was taken while recommendations are developed for ensuring such egregious crimes

cannot be repeated. We should also encourage partnership between large, medium, and small enterprises, as well as those in the private and public sectors, in order to establish economic coherence and tranquillity, prevent breaches of trust, and to advance the quality and global prospects of Malaysian business. Tearing down divisions and silos (physical and mental) will rebuild trust, especially as we bridge economic and financial organisations with state and local community leaders to promote greater trust and equality. We need to also adjust policies of cooperation and partnership to rethink subsidised business and crackdown on monopolies and business mafias to make sure that fees for public goods are redirected back towards benefiting the people and not into the pockets of cronies or executive elites.

“ The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say ‘I.’ And that’s not because they have trained themselves not to say ‘I.’ They don’t think ‘I.’ They think ‘we’; they think ‘team.’ They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don’t sidestep it, but ‘we’ gets the credit... This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done. ”

Peter Drucker, management guru and co-author of *Managing for the Future*

## Legal

A substantial deficit in trust also finds itself in out-of-date laws left for another day. Now is the time to review current laws and codes, as well as the constitution in order to improve trust between the people and the authorities, scrutinizing measures that threaten that sacred trust, and repealing or reforming draconian procedures and laws. It is essential, as with the other SCRIPT drivers, to advocate for greater independence of the judiciary to improve both the trust we put in our legal system as well as the trust people put in our systems of law and order, while paving the way to ensuring the judiciary is never again threatened by interests thinking themselves beyond the law. To keep the task at hand balanced, we must establish independent oversight bodies for law enforcement, the judiciary, and the government, dedicated

to the preservation of justice – freeing it from corruption and influence – and the equal and fair application of laws to all in Malaysia. To bring back trust in Malaysia's legal system, we must reform the nation's legal apparatus to better enable trust, ensure equal representation and opportunity in legal institutions, and impose stricter fines and punishments for those who break trust covenants within Malaysia. For the posterity of trust, we should also explore election and campaign reforms to actualise our democratic potential and to crack down on the influence of money politics.

## Institutional

Too often overlooked in this area, it is our institutions that will play a critical role for building trust in Malaysia and seeing to the protection of our national unity. To start things off correctly, we need to encourage the creation of bodies or divisions within government, public, and private entities that find ways for establishing and renewing sustainable trust. We must also explore technological as well as cultural or community-oriented mechanisms or institutions for promoting cross-cultural and societal trust at national, state, and local levels. This will require us to advance the reform agenda to build better trust between the government and the people, including a constitutional amendment to establish term limits, continued reiteration of interstate relations, especially those between Peninsular Malaysian, Sarawak, and Sabah, ironing out of legislation to combat money politics, and innovation of new legislation to prevent the degradation of Malaysian democracy or the besmirching of the people's mandate. Beyond our borders we must seek to restore trust with our global neighbours by re-evaluating Malaysia's diplomatic core and foreign relations on the global and regional (Pacific and Southeast Asian) levels, critically thinking on how to improve Malaysia's role played with regards to positions we hold and issues we are tied to both directly and indirectly – specifically taking into account our deeply interconnect world and the complexity of contemporary international affairs. Once trust is being rebuilt, we must maintain it and this requires enhanced feedback and communication mechanisms to keep our Parliament and government institutions up to speed on events, particularly those at the grassroots and local community levels. We must also introduce long overdue reforms to the checks and balances within and to various ministries with a particular focus on disbursement of state funds and approval of projects that guarantee impacts (to the environment, communities, future generations, etc.) as well as the interest of the people have been considered and remain uncompromised. Regulatory institutions will have some of the greatest work ahead of them. We must initiate

necessary reforms to present oversight bodies, including but certainly not limited to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), to make sure these bodies are compliant with the policy framework established herein and to build stronger trust between the government and the people.

## Educational

The real struggle to restore Malaysian trust, as is the case with the other SCRIPT drivers, will take place in our classrooms and educational facilities. It is therefore imperative that we develop curriculum and programmes to promote trust in primary and secondary schools. The aim of our educational formation needs to reorient our culture from one of Cultural Relativism and Ignorance to Cultural Appreciation and Civilisational Dialogue through special programmes and curriculum reform at all levels of education in Malaysia. We must also encourage research and study into endemic corruption in Malaysia. Most of the lessons to be learned on this front will begin with a thorough investigation of instances of wrongdoing and corruption within Malaysian schools at all levels to root out scams, cheats, payoffs, and neglect throughout our educational system and build up trust in an education received in Malaysia. We need to also focus on promoting special programmes aimed at equity in schools (erasing gender gaps, seeing to necessities of special needs students, reducing the burden on M40 and B40 families, etc.) partnering with communities and businesses to give every child equal opportunity. We need to also recognise the strides that have been made to improve Malaysia's education system and build upon such bodies as the National Council of Higher Education and other similar departments within the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education to standardise and uplift quality as well as address grievances within the systems, building stronger bonds between students, families, communities, and educators. To salvage our educational reputation, we need to design a curriculum, in Malay and English but also in Mandarin, Tamil, and other languages, around inculcating national trust in a diverse and multicultural Malaysia. We need to promote critical value-based learning that enhances our Islamic identity and strong dedication to ethics, cultural study, innovations in the field of history, and travel learning (studying abroad both within Malaysia and across the world). To take Malaysian education to the next level, we must initiate greater future-oriented elements into the curriculum including new material from practical technology learning (coding, computer sciences, etc.) to civic learning that imbues a sense of moral consideration for advancing technologies and social media as well as teaches students to spot fake-news and remain critical

and socially conscious online. In our pursuit we must remain balanced, establishing greater societal appreciation of higher learning pathways so that students can be proud of pursuing university, vocational, or other career and learning pathways. We should also encourage education as a life-long pursuit and foster programmes that respect that value.

## Social

Trust in the society should not be taken as a given or something that will come when all the other pieces come into place. We must remain active in reforging trust by creating public service announcements, online content, and social programmes to improve trust in Malaysia by initiating open dialogues and encouraging conscious communication. We also need to negotiate technological divides within society to grant greater agency and empower the people towards greater societal trust. By encouraging better communications and dissemination of personal stories, we will do a great service to build a more human-to-human bond of respect and trust between civil servants and the Malaysian people. We should also focus on establishing independent bodies tasked with creating safe spaces and pathways for communication amongst the disenfranchised, disadvantaged, and untouchable individuals and communities. It is imperative to also launch youth and women's groups as well as bridge generational divides through cross-generational programmes that value traditional wisdom and innovative curiosity, all of these aimed at creating a more trusting Malaysian future. Social trust polices can also be aided through the creation of greater pedestrian and community spaces beyond mega shopping malls through redevelopment and utilisation of wasted spaces.

## Cultural

Our culture holds trust as serious business and a societal good that must not be taken for granted. First, we must recall the value of trust in our national history, from the trust between rulers and the people, between people of different backgrounds, and between the people and our environment. Our greatest efforts must be put into promoting a culture of transparency and accountability throughout Malaysia. We must also seek new ways to reinvigorate a culture of trust within our families, communities, workplaces, and everyday life, especially through the provocation of cross-generational trust in our communities, educational culture, work culture, and with regards to national and international issues. We can empower our culture

by initiating conversation and cultural projects focussed on future trust such as, for example, navigating the climate crisis and environmental respect, sustainable development, and digital futures. This also includes the development of online and technologically infused cultures that bridge divides and leaps while retaining traditional values and the tenets of our humanity. Ultimately, we must promote trust as the lynchpin towards implementing a culture that values sustainability, care and compassion, mutual respect, innovation, and a prosperous society.

## Urban

Where urban centres have not been traditionally associated with trust, a tremendous opportunity awaits actualisation in this endeavour. To begin we need to identify key inhibitions to trust in urban areas. In carrying out this process we should also target modes of mass transit, road tolls, and parking fees along with other pricing regimes for public goods for reform and reallocation to reduce the burden on the people and ensure the prices paid are justified and go primarily back into either the service provided or civic benefits. To empower urbanites, we need to sponsor greater intercommunity engagement to build better understanding of the rich diversity in urban communities and make sure individuals and communities are not lost in the concrete jungle. It is also important for us to develop methods for better smart technology augmentation upon and to coexist with pre-existing low-tech systems, so the digital divide is reduced. Concurrent to this we need to re-evaluate the gig economy's role in our urban areas, balancing pre-existing services and careers and seeking equity for all, regardless of technological proficiency and level. Across our nation we must design urban plans that work with the natural environment, preserve historical sites, and optimise public spaces and pedestrian mobility. Instead of building more malls, we need to promote individual, community, business, and commuter engagement and trust through innovative community spaces and open-air smart spaces for Malaysian customs (marketplaces, food truck lots, promotion of the arts, physical exercise, festivals, etc.). We also need to launch urban campaigns to clean up waterways, parks, natural, and historical landmarks to expand volunteer activities and engage the people in their neighbourhoods. To grant greater agency and ensure lasting trust in urban communities we must encourage urban neighbourhood explorations of identity – funding projects to build traditional structures, customise road and walkways, lights, and street signs to fit this identity, whether new or old or a fusion of the two, to sustainably build traditional structures, customise road and walkways, lights, and street signs to fit this identity, whether new, old, or a fusion of the two.

## Rural

Trust will be a critical mode towards reinvigorating our rural communities and building better social cohesion across the various communities that comprise Malaysia especially between more rural and urban centres. To begin, like in urban centres, we must identify key inhibitions to trust in rural areas. It is crucial that rural dwellers are given stock in their community. This can be done by engaging locals and indigenous thought in the day-to-day happenings in their locales, building bridges between communities within states and even up to the federal level. To sustain and build from this process we need to develop better modes of feedback and communication to make sure the rural voices are heard on the national level. One of the most critical major policy moves for rural communities revolves around establishing a new model for farm-to-table that gives farmers, sellers, manufacturers, middlemen, and consumers equal agency and responsibility for one another, a trust modelled approach to fixing our agricultural economic dilemmas. It is important to also promote rural identity exploration projects that incentivise and grant funds to rural communities, villages, kampongs, and settlements to hold greater say over their land as well as find indigenous, traditional methods for designing their homes, and be able to celebrate their identity and traditions without financial sacrifice. While maintaining this balance, we must explore ways to integrate state of the art education, healthcare, and amenities to rural locales without sacrificing a desired culture, ways of life, or preferred futures. To carry this out we will build the physical and educational infrastructure to bring technological capabilities to more rural locations based on the desires and inputs of the local population that respects a sustainable development model and expands Wi-Fi services and the agency granted by technological means to any who want it within every corner of Malaysia. Our democratic process and citizen engagement will be uplifted by integrating local styles of governance to allow for smooth translation of various communities' preferred systems into the state and national systems, respecting our democratic spirit and creative, innovative abilities. Trust between rural and urban centres will be essential for national unity. Therefore, we will be required to create new ways for rural-urban mobility methods to encourage respectful tourism, mobile business capabilities, and reduce traffic and fuel emissions particularly during holidays and weekend travels. Throughout this process, we must continuously evolve new ways of bridging urban and rural communities, building upon tried and tested methods as well as finding new ways to reduce the extremes of urbanisation and ruralisation, and allow for smooth and functional transitions between all of Malaysia's diverse locations – building a trustful nation.

## Complexity

Complexity, to the proportion we experience contemporaneously, makes trust untenable and therefore we must understand it and study it to prevent postnormal times from killing our pursuits of a trusting Malaysia. We have to begin with where we still have some semblance of control, by reducing extraneous complexities within society in order to support the germination of the seeds of trust. We must take stock and respect the rich diversities, found all throughout Malaysia, and the creative cultural moves that are taken to promote trust in a given locale. Working with complexity as it is, we need to develop navigations that respect the complexity involved in negotiating technological divides in our society and the combination of technological and nontechnological options (more technology is not always the answer). When nothing can be done to counter the complexity of the system, in encouraging clear and effective communication, we ease the complexity that accompanies balancing the diversity and multiculturalism of crossroad nations such as ours. Continuously, we must work to evolve a culture that embraces and can think in complex ways about everyday life and to build a nation confident with carrying on when faced with emerging, growing complexities.

## Contradictions

In order for trust policies to hold, we need a new approach to contradictions as they arise. We must embrace the inevitable contradictions found within our societies so that we may understand and seek to transcend them in building a trusting, plural Malaysia. This requires us to educate our people, particularly our children, so that they can engage with the contradictions they find in the world and develop processes for sorting out falsehoods and reasoning towards truth. We must continuously develop ways of understanding disenchantment and disenfranchisement in Malaysian society so that impediments to national trust can be transcended and small breeches of trust do not result in one bad apple condemning the orchard. For the sake of posterity in the trust we hope to build, we need to establish rules of engagement and standard operating procedures for building trust while also making clear the ramifications for actions that betray trust in Malaysia, in order to reduce tensions and conflicts.

## Chaos

Chaos, like complexity and contradictions, is typically associated with its negative effects on trust, but also provides potential avenues for us to build stronger national trust. We need to investigate methods for complexity and contradiction reduction and/or understanding in order to mitigate instances of chaos that threaten national trust. Parallel to this investigation we must reaffirm equality under the rule of law in order to reduce outlier events from discrediting trust in Malaysia's systems of justice and order. All along we need to be continually reassessing and adapting the bridging between communities and peoples within Malaysia to reduce diminished trust between the people or the faith they give to our democratic system. To prevent abuses of trust, we must prohibit the use of trust as a crutch within society, always seeking new ways to demonstrate and reaffirm the people's trust in our society.

## Simultaneity

Building a trusting Malaysia will require an appreciation of and ability to work simultaneously. This will require us to adopt methods of delegation and shared collective action to quickly and effectively respond to events and crises that arise simultaneously. We also need to explore how trust can be optimised to assist with the navigation of simultaneous happenings. To prepare for rapid action, faced with simultaneous events and crises taking place, we must fortify our pathways for communication, feedback, response, and lesson learning to master a model for working simultaneously amongst our diverse population, communities, locales, and between real and digital lives.

## Futures/Change

To build a lasting trust in Malaysia, stronger than the abuses of one or a few and to fully actualise the SCRIPT framework and build a better Malaysia, awareness and agency in futures must be held as a priority. To set this off on stable footing, we need to establish a variety of bodies, centres, and task forces for exploring current trends and emerging issues to develop scenarios and strategic plans for ensuring sustainable trust into Malaysia's future. Those working in futures should then explore the futures of trust while also keeping in mind potential arising challenges to status quos in order to be agents of change (A 'trust in God, but tie your camel' + 'from things changing to changing things' approach). We must keep in mind and consider how technology, indigenous wisdom, environmental dignity, good governance, and

changing social dynamics, and the balance of these, can fortify national trust into the future. Ultimately, we must evolve a futures awareness and literacy within society that gives impetus towards experimental reiteration, learning from mistakes, and reform and renovation to build a Malaysia that embodies the drivers of this policy framework into the future.

## Monitoring

To track and follow trust policy, we will need to develop technological and non-technological methods for feedback and equip community leaders, civil servants, and government officials with the ability to keep their finger on the pulse of the nation. We also need to identify pathways of trust breach and corruption to keep watch in the event that things go afoul. Keeping ourselves open for reiteration, we should track new endeavours and interactions between communities focussing into the absence of trust or apathy across urban, rural, digital, and physical settings and across diverse identities. To give ourselves an ability to adapt and course correct, we need to build in policy stopgaps that allow for evaluation and brainstorming along the quest to become a reformed and advanced society.

“ Never trust a man who has reason to suspect that you know he has injured you. ”

Henry Fielding, eighteenth century English novelist and irony writer

## Enabling Institutions

To rebuild trust in Malaysia, we as a society can take the first steps by considering the following policies which have considered our new Malaysian definitions, the policy imperatives and targets we have identified, and the postnormal dimensions of issues related to trust in our society.

We will lead by example, establishing the relevant bodies and measures within Parliament and various ministries to promote and uphold greater trust in Malaysia. Further, we will launch new or expand existing research endeavours and projects studying issues relating to trust in Malaysia. We then will create legislation and policies that respect functional convention and prevent the interference that could hinder judicial independence, the rule of law, or the dignity and human rights of any individual or community. Overseeing all of this we will integrate better SCRIPT integrity into the ministerial post and offices related to law and Parliament, including the Speakers in the two houses of Parliament.

Included in these endeavours is the appointment and launch of a parliamentary task force that seeks greater legal defence advocacy to tackle the issue of free speech and press, to protect and promote watch-dog practices, and uplift the Fourth Estate in Malaysia, while also encouraging independent efforts on this front. We will also promote technological advancements (such as blockchain) and their innovative application into various social spheres, enabling the development of higher trust and reducing endemic corruption throughout society. Furthermore, we will introduce a broad reform agenda to cut down on police and other civil service corruption and build back trust between the people and those who uphold law and order, meanwhile establishing better channels for reporting and oversight. In order to build better trust between the people, the government, and the outside world, within and beyond our borders, we will begin a holistic review of Malaysian policy towards immigration, migrant affairs, refugee, and legal/sovereignty policies that incorporate the SCRIPT framework.

Trust being more than a one-way street, will require your participation and suggestions or ideas to take us from this starting line presented here towards the better Malaysian future we envision.



“ Trust one who has proved it. ”

Virgil, ancient Roman poet

# The SCRIPT for Post-Covid Malaysia

## Conventional Limitations

On New Year's Day 2020, when only a few individuals in Hubei Province, China, had been infected by the new SARS-CoV-2 virus, the world considered itself prepared for a global pandemic. Almost every country had a plan in place for such an event, especially here in Southeast Asia, where the memories of the 2003 SARS outbreak were still fresh in our minds. Two critical failures resulted in the Covid-19 pandemic hitting the world so hard. First, was the failure to appreciate how fast the virus could spread in our contemporary world which was only exacerbated by the slow and hesitant action of various governments and authorities. Second, was a failure to imagine that SARS-CoV-2 would act differently than other viruses we had come across in the past and our collective inability to act with high levels of uncertainty with regard to the spread, effects, and treatments pertaining to Covid-19. Other unpreparedness came from failing to appreciate the public health need for data collection coinciding with many healthcare systems experiencing severe budgetary cuts in the years prior to the new pandemic. After the initial superspreader events occurred in each country, it was not long before health organisations all over the world were overburdened, even crippled, by the virus; and governments everywhere found themselves unable to cope with the pressures and uncertainties.

## Our Approach

A critical take away from the Covid-19 pandemic is that hubris will always get us in the end. Therefore, we need to adapt our systems to be more reiterative, able to adjust quickly, and open to learning lessons when things do not go as expected. The first major lesson from the collective trauma of Covid-19 was that we are all in

this together. Not only will future pandemic preparedness require a holistic, society-wide approach, but so too will our recovery and re-emergence from the one we just faced. Malaysia, in its multicultural nature and with a history of being the crossroads of a wide variety of peoples, is at a unique advantage. All elements of our society – from the various professions and skills our people are blessed with to our rich difference in culture, language, and wisdom – had to come together and must continue working together to weather the crises that affect us all. The greatest achievements made during the pandemic were made when people cooperated. We saw this through the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other needs across the globe and through the international collaborative development of vaccines. These achievements also came about through creatively defying convention when convention proved incapable of getting the job done.

In Malaysia, the efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19 have largely been a failure due to slow and ineffective action, confusing communications, and a reactionary approach which tested the people's trust to its limits. It also gave rise to numerous other simultaneous crises which have resulted in a great deal of suffering for the rakyat. The new normal has been more of the same and the recovery plans presented, thus far, have done little to show sustainable recovery is being made. The SCRIPT approach to Pandemic Recovery and Future Preparedness will take to heart the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic while also rectifying the failures of the recent past so that we are ready for whatever awaits us on the horizon.

“ Normal led to this. To avert the future pandemics we know are coming, we MUST grapple with all the ways normal failed us. We have to build something better. ”

Ed Yong, science journalist, *The Atlantic*, September 2020

## Target Populations/Areas

Re-building Malaysia in a post-Covid world will require a society-wide shift, but to kick off this great endeavour it is important for our policy to target key populations and areas. While it is easy to pass the buck onto the Ministry of Health, all ministries are integral stakeholders in the effects of a global pandemic and must play their role in our recovery and preparation for future disruptions. However, it is essential for our policies to focus on healthcare professionals, including wellbeing professionals, other frontliners, essential healthcare employees, as well as educational institutions, migrant workers, and disenfranchised communities. It is essential to keep the general public in mind as we craft the policies to transition Malaysia beyond the trauma of the recent pandemic.

## Policy Imperatives

The Covid-19 pandemic not only brought Malaysia to a grinding halt, but the whole world along with it. As SCRIPT is a holistic societal framework, the targets above will be utilised to efficiently bring about nationwide change to recover and learn from the pandemic in order to be better prepared for future crises and improve upon what deficiencies were made apparent during some of the darker episodes of our history.

## Economic/Financial

The economic sector is crucial to national health and endurance in times of crisis. In this area, there is tremendous opportunity for improvement. First, pensions, emergency funds, benefits, and cash reserves need to be completely rethought, accommodating for future crises that will make the Covid-19 pandemic look quaint by comparison. A government worth its weight, holds as a top priority the wellbeing of the people and the preservation of their financial agency. More sustainable funds and schemes need to be put in place and kept stocked for future natural disasters and calamity. Going hand in hand with this, banks and businesses in the financial sector need to implement more care and compassion as well as respect into their policies and procedures in times of deep uncertainty. Loan moratoriums, extensions of credit, and economic easing policies should not require debate in difficult times and systems should be in place to balance the losses and risk. Our Malaysian sense of innovation should be ready to improve cash flow and purchasing abilities in times when we must remain distanced, but policies should be put in place for those without technological means and to make sure no individuals are left out

(particularly noncitizens, rural communities, and aging or medically disadvantaged persons). All of the innovations nudged by the conditions of the Movement Control Order (MCO) and prolonged pandemic standard operating procedures (SOP) need to be reviewed and improved or replaced with more SCRIPT compliant methods so that we can advance as a society or at least be prepared for the next crisis or pandemic. The economic and financial policies we develop now are critical towards softening the blow of future catastrophe, protecting the people's prosperity, and maintaining trust within Malaysia.

## Legal

In order to contain and combat the spread of Covid-19, a great deal of sacrifice needed to be made, particularly in parliamentary democracies such as Malaysia. Trust was eroded and prosperity denied, spawning further, simultaneous crises of different natures partially because of draconian laws and out-of-date legal procedures. Lawmakers, policymakers, and the judiciary will have their work cut out for them settling the cases brought on by the pandemic while also seeking to develop forward thinking approaches to balancing the people's freedoms and protection – the noble task that justice demands of us. In this process, a legal culture that embodies the care and compassion, respect, and prosperous trajectories of the people must arise. Legal terms must be clearly communicated and seek to alleviate confusion in society so that trust between the law and the people can ensure a sustainable order. Legal rights, particularly with concern to data, environmental wellbeing, and healthcare need to be reviewed and expanded. SCRIPT should also be a guide to rectifying the legal loopholes that have allowed certain elites to benefit from systemic corruption and the suffering of the people while propelling environmental and political crises that befall all of society, hitting hardest the poorest in Malaysia.

“ Law and order are the medicine of the body politic and when the body politic gets sick, medicine must be administered. ”

Bhim Rao Ambedkar, Chairman of India's Constitution Draft Committee and India's First Minister of Law and Justice

## Institutional

Post-Covid policy needs to uplift our institutions and instil a sense of belonging to a wider network. Our institutions should focus on their strengths and note their weaknesses so that they can work with other institutions, within Malaysia, to develop greater trust and sustainability in actions and policies. Futures and foresight as well as data analytics needs to be inbuilt into our institutions to prepare them for advanced social and technological transformations. At the same time, care and compassion as well as respect need to be guiding principles in building trust between people and institutions while also enabling institutions to better serve society – forming a more harmonious ecosystem that makes us more resilient to future crises. Trust in expertise needs to be restored. The reform provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic would benefit from a multilateral approach, involving a national discussion of the implementation of SCRIPT into our institutions while the institutions themselves work out their own specific ways in which they can bring us back from the pandemic in more sustainable ways based on mutual trust.

## Educational

The educational sector is a prime example of how the pandemic brought dormant and ignored flaws in our systems to the fore, while creating new ones. The result is the dread that a lost generation of young Malaysians have had their education irreparably disrupted at a critical time in their development. SCRIPT is designed to assist with issues that make Malaysia's education system so problematic: corrupt scholarship schemes, unqualified teachers, unsuitable and dangerous infrastructures, digital technology divides, period spot checks, etc. Meanwhile, long overdue reforms in the curriculum (emphasis on history, language learning, out-dated disciplines, antiquated teaching methods, lack of skills education, other necessities to prepare for the digital technology revolution) have been postponed

to the detriment of our future. We not only need to pandemic-proof and update our decrepit school facilities, but devise innovative programmes to bring back and catch up anyone left behind by pandemic and economic hardships. The cultural shifts required for a post-Covid Malaysia begin in the classroom and SCRIPT offers a guide towards a more caring and compassionate and respectful population in the future. When we get our educational sector back on track, we already set the future up for success and prosperity and even have a model for navigating other areas in advancing a better Malaysia out of the ashes of the pandemic.

## Social

The retreat mandated by the pandemic has chipped away at our social cohesion and new concerns and old troubles need to be kept on the forefront of our minds so that we can build back our communities and nation better, having learned the lessons of the pandemic. SCRIPT policies kick off dialogues and polylogues that will help us, as a society, transcend issues and develop innovative approaches to cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Racial, ethnic, religious, and lifestyle differences need to be open topics for discussion aimed at understanding and better acceptance of Malaysia's rich diversity. We need to give due consideration and respect for the mental health and personal preferences of others at a time of heightened social anxiety, driven by confusing policies and uncertainty needs. As people adjust to the return of physical meetings, what lessons do we take to heart concerning public health and personal respect? How do we make for a more caring and compassionate society? How do we rebuild intersocial trust? What balances between people, communities, nature, and our histories are left unconsidered? These questions need to be addressed with sustainable thinking and policy that seeks the prosperity of all in Malaysia.

## Cultural

SCRIPT is not always about pushing the newest and latest, but, while seeking such advancements, offers us the potential to take a step back and reflect on our history and culture. Malaysia's unique cultural cornucopia equips us with positive and negative traits that should be examined to see how they can be better navigated, or if need be, transcended to progress Malaysia into a Post-Covid era. Meanwhile, a respect for the indigenous wisdom that had been missed could better inform our policies to make sure Malaysia does not lose any of its rich variety of ideas

and viewpoints that will be crucial to future policymaking. Encouraged cultural engagement by all fulfils SCRIPT's pursuit of greater social coexistence through tearing down barriers to trust and respect and by opening up new avenues for care and compassion. The highest priority is a critical reflection on our values and principles so that we can find common cause and bring forward, into new futures, that which defines us and enriches our societies.

## Urban

The pandemic brought the problems of urban living to the fore. Almost all that was sought in the urban life was cut off by the restrictions necessary to combat the virus. The promise of prosperity was sacrificed as businesses dropped like flies and economic agency was reduced to a means of survival. Post-Covid policies must transform our urban centres from the prisons they became during the pandemic back into the hubs of opportunity they once purported to be. Inequalities and societal barriers nudged by our civic planning need rethinking and overcoming. A better respect for nature and appreciation of outdoor/open air spaces should meet with higher scrutinised travel pathways and policies that bridge Malaysian communities and allow for smooth commuting so that, regardless of where you live, city life can be enjoyed by all.

## Rural

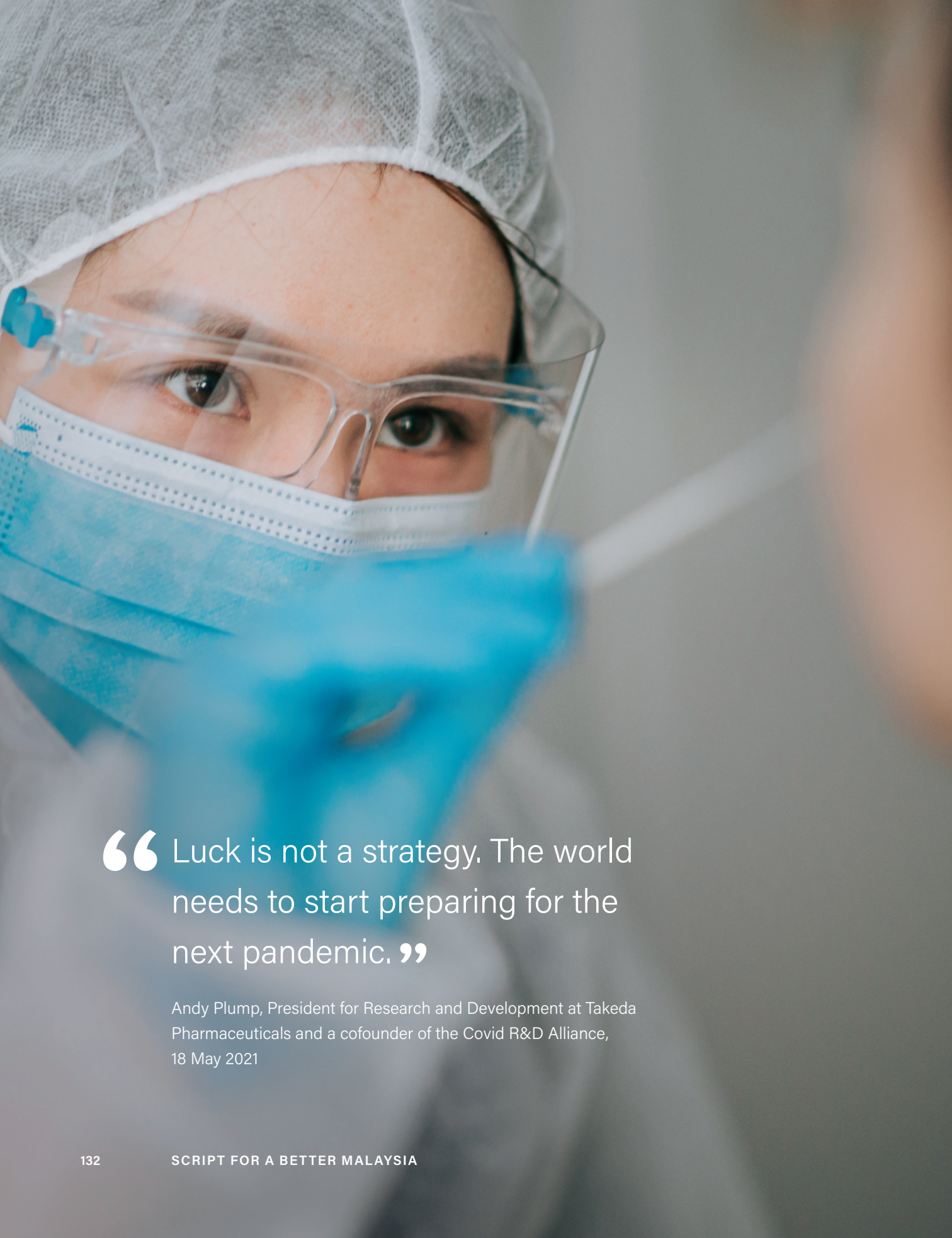
The pandemic not only revealed that a virus has no preference for rural or urban centres, but in our lockdowns and isolations, rural developments were left abandoned, and the rural/urban divide widened, leaving many outside urban areas behind, unable to see loved ones and without access to the aid and supplies flowing through the major cities. SCRIPT policies will seek to make up for the lost promises in order to uplift rural communities and provide them with the infrastructure required to allow them to function and remain empowered in their personal agency. Technology and infrastructure updates will be critical to granting these freedoms to those living in rural areas. Meanwhile mobility between urban and rural centres needs to be fortified to make sure disruptions like the pandemic cannot widen the rifts between our communities. Sustainability and innovation can guide renovation of rural areas to outfit them for all their contemporary needs while retaining their traditions, identities, and cultures.

## Health

Health, like education, also provides an illustrious example of the pandemic exposing flaws inherent in the system while bringing new issues and lessons to the table. Simply put, our healthcare sector was not ready for a pandemic. Facilities, workers, patients, and the complex array of elements at play in keeping Malaysia healthy were given the ultimate stress test by the pandemic. SCRIPT policies seek to completely revolutionise our healthcare systems for a post-Covid age. This will not be simple; nor can be done overnight. It will also, like the other sectors, require the input and cooperation of a societal effort to be successful. All our facilities (hospitals, clinics, research centres, educational centres, public health infrastructure) need to be reviewed and updated to become prepared and adaptive spaces for yet unseen developments in the future. Healthcare professionals need to be given the respect and recompense they deserve for the ultimate sacrifices they have made and duty they have served. General public understanding of sanitation and public health procedures and policies also need to be advanced. And the innovative, entrepreneurial spirit of Malaysians should be fostered in healthcare as well as other sectors. Ignorance towards mental health, wellbeing, and healthy lifestyles need to be tackled immediately. The aims of SCRIPT are not to make a health sector ready for the next pandemic, but to make a globally recognised and praised health sector ready for any crises that may befall Malaysia in the future.

## Postnormal Dimensions

A large factor behind the failures of two governments during and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic is a lack of appreciation of the postnormal dimensions at play. Postnormal times; a transitional period, requires a new way of thinking and working with policy that is reiterative and flexible while also being forward-thinking in its approach. It requires understanding that complex crises cannot be commanded into resolution. The SCRIPT policy framework aims to provide a holistic way of navigating current and emerging crisis. It takes into account not just accelerating change but also the changing nature of change itself.



“ Luck is not a strategy. The world needs to start preparing for the next pandemic. ”

Andy Plump, President for Research and Development at Takeda Pharmaceuticals and a cofounder of the Covid R&D Alliance, 18 May 2021

## Complexity

A bulk of SCRIPT's approach to postnormal times rests on enhancing our appreciation and understanding of reality where complexity has become the norm. A common flaw in dealing with complexity is to attempt to simplify it. Complexity does not work like this; complex problems require complex solutions. Otherwise, the variables change, and policymakers lose the tracks. Not only have our issues become complex, but so too has our society – our families, our communities, our daily lives, even where Malaysia finds itself in regional and global affairs. Post-Covid policy must be able to cope with the reality of our increasing complexity. Therefore, post-Covid policies will call for broad cooperation between various sectors and actors and must account for rapidly changing horizons. The policies themselves should be proposed in such a way that options are left open, and a variety of factors are given priority. Most of all, quick adaptation must be built for the policy to adjust and change tracks.

## Contradictions

The pandemic brought to the surface a variety of contradictions within our systems, society, and institutions that must be addressed. Contradictions cannot be resolved; they must be transcended. Post-Covid policy will require considerable review of codes, procedures, laws, and policies implemented that either increase contradictions or are contradictory in their application. SCRIPT analysis often helps to surface the contradictions that may have been ignored in the past – often arising due to conflicts of modernity and traditions, progress and growth, environmental dignity and development, as well as a host of contradictions within democracy, capitalism, and various political slogans. For instance, the government asking the people to 'just trust us' often provokes the opposite thought. And the new normal everyone is looking for is actually a return to the old business-as-usual which, in most cases, was the key contributor to many of our contemporary issues in the first place.

## Chaos

Chaos is an especially disruptive and destructive element to any government (especially a democratically elected one) in our contemporary world. SCRIPT's awareness of postnormal times will push a conscious effort to reduce the conditions for chaos (knowing this can never be completely accomplished) while also focussing on complexity and seeking transcendence of contradictions to aid in this overall

effort. Through post-Covid policy, our government, health sector, education sector, businesses, and communities are better prepared to cope with chaotic instances and seek greater foresight input so that together we can build proper navigations for the postnormal dimensions of Malaysia's future.

## Simultaneity

The pandemic demonstrated the worst case scenario for simultaneous events – particularly crises – as Malaysia was pummelled by the waves of political, economic, social, and environmental crises at the same time. Post-Covid policy under the SCRIPT framework gives Malaysia an edge for working with simultaneous happenings and to developing ways of working simultaneously across sectors and communities. Strong communication and coordination between diverse groups will assist greatly in working with simultaneity. Good governance and leadership will be critical for our nation to navigate the simultaneous troubles of postnormal times.

## Futures/Change

While standard conventional policy approaches can handle looking back at the past to reform historical errors and even to manage the present to build for the moment, SCRIPT also looks to the future and remains receptive to change. Post-Covid policy in Malaysia must embody futures techniques and analysis to shape and implement a sustainable recovery and to develop foresight for future problems and issues. We need to keep an eye on global trends, anticipate emerging issues, and develop scenarios for upcoming health and other crises on the horizon for Malaysia, our regional neighbourhood, and the planet. Futures studies should also be institutionalised within the government and various sectors to improve meeting SCRIPT policy aims and to better imagine solutions to a variety of problems.

## Monitoring

Monitoring will be crucial to post-Covid Malaysia, but it must be done delicately and with care and respect of others. Malaysia needs a better way to justly collect data, secure other's data, and build a culture and population with the awareness of Big Data and the power this commodity holds. A vast wealth of data was collected during the pandemic that needs to be accounted for, secured, and kept from benefiting corrupt fat cat elites in Malaysia and across the globe. Meanwhile,

old fashioned reporting and survey feedback needs to be bolstered to ensure that SCRIPT policies are taking hold and having a desired effect.

## Enabling Institutions

To deliver Malaysia into a post-Covid era ready for the challenges that lie before us, a real change is needed. This change must learn from the mistakes of two failed governments, recognise and work in the postnormal space we find ourselves in, and embody the SCRIPT framework. The following policies present us with guiding principles towards this new approach, provoking us all to work together to build a better Malaysia.

First, we must address and put an end to the perplexity and uncertainty that clouded the policy approaches to the pandemic in the past. Our communication regarding Malaysian health updates, procedures, and opportunities must be clear and include better educational content and approaches to addressing questions and confusions regarding present and future health crises. We will initiate a thorough audit of the MySejathera App and system to make it transparent and accountable, to ensure the public data is secure, and that all data collected remains under the ownership of the people and the government. In doing this, we will review the data withheld from the public so that a full broad picture of the damage incurred during the pandemic is made clear.

We will launch a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Covid-19 Pandemic, the MCO, the Declaration of Emergency, applications of laws with regards to the pandemic (such as the Prevention and Control of Infectious Disease Act of 1988), reports of abuse, and actions of Ministries and within the Prime Ministers' Office in relation to the pandemic. The task is to suggest changes we need to make and wrongs needing to be corrected so that the government and Parliament have a detailed report to work from.

Concurrent to this inquiry, we will launch a third-party audit of Malaysia's healthcare standard with a particular focus on any internal corruptions in our healthcare system regarding procurement, allocations, and our present vaccine programmes. Alongside implementing the recommendations of this audit, the Ministry of Health will be tasked with its own in-depth review of all our healthcare facilities throughout Malaysia, evaluating health infrastructure needs and addressing hospital (facilities as well as supplies) to population ratio discrepancies.

In Parliament, we will push through healthcare legislation to mitigate healthcare risks (e.g. smoking, food and consumer product regulations, etc.) to Malaysians.

We will also establish a new alert or coded system for public health awareness to alert the general public about potential health concerns, recommended procedures, and ways to seek help in case of symptoms or illness. It is incumbent on us to develop a scheme for increased medical mobility to rapidly set up emergency clinics and health centres across Malaysia at short notice while also providing for mobile clinics to deliver healthcare to rural and remote locations on a more routine basis. All along, we will also need to secure funding and broker partnerships with local businesses to innovate new ways of promoting public health, funding endeavours, and propagating awareness.

In continuing to learn from the lessons offered by the Covid-19 pandemic, we will establish and secure funding for a Malaysian Institute of Epidemiology to push research into diseases as well as treatments and vaccine development, seeking to put Malaysia on the map in this field. To address the hidden mental health pandemic, we will establish and secure funding for a Malaysian Institute of Mental Health.

To tackle the secondary effects of the pandemic, including lost time, we will ask the Ministry of Education to form a special task force to address the lost generation and recommend actions to rectify the disruptions to student's education. We will also negotiate regional and global regulations to increase flights and tourism into Malaysia, obtain a redux of Malaysia Tourism Year 2020 from ASEAN, infuse incentives into the tourism sector and transitional programmes, to get people back to their careers; and build better financial safety net and funding opportunities for protection in future hard times. To assist in shifting our societal outlooks, we will declare a Frontliner and Essential Worker Appreciation Holiday, and hold talks to improve the working conditions of frontliners, essential workers, and medical and healthcare employees.

To empower stakeholder status throughout Malaysia, we will announce tax incentives for institutional renovation and reform to promote a ground-up approach to making Malaysia more public health conscious and compliant, balance home and in office work, and promote greater respect for mental and physical health. We will also partner with financial institutions as well as business and community leaders to develop a long-term approach to the pending debt crisis in Malaysia that forgives unjustly accrued debts and develops strategies for individuals and families to get out of debt traps, secure funds and aid to elevate B40 debt and build up their financial agency.

To solidify our recovery from the pandemic, we will establish new emergency aid funds and develop better stocking systems for food, essential items, PPE, and other emergency needs in the event of a future pandemic. We will provide a plan

for rapid deployment of pandemic needs and negotiate procurement strategies with our trade partners to buffer against future disruptions. Overall, it is imperative to launch a revision of the national plan for emergency preparedness that is adaptable, subject to frequent future review, and is able to navigate complexity and adjust to the emergence of simultaneous crises.

These initial policies would serve as a springboard for greater participation and inclusive decision making, driven by the spirit of democracy. They emphasise an end to the days of 'wait and see,' 'trust us,' and 'abah knows best.' By ushering a new era of politics based on the SCRIPT framework, we will prepare Malaysia for whatever the future may have in store for us.

“ To understand is hard.  
Once one understands, action is easy. ”

Sun Yat-sen, Father of the Chinese Nation

# The SCRIPT for Navigating Cost of Living

## Conventional Limitations

The present economic crises concerning cost of living, inflation, and food security is a product of the flaws of conventions that deal with such issues. It is also an outcome of greed, endemic corruptions and a complete lack of foresight on the part of our governments. Presently, governments only react when the problems become deeply entrenched, following the conventional wisdom of others, preoccupying their efforts with firefighting the recent past, at best the present. We ought to be proactive; act with anticipation and foresight before the problems emerge. Conventional methods have driven many countries towards more isolationist and protectionist policies and thought. But no person is an island. We need to not only appreciate our role in a more networked world, but also understand the complexities that have multiplied and created an ecosystem of rampant chaotic events that are riddled with contradictions – ignored or unseen. New levels of thinking are going to be required for us to overcome the multiple, but interlinked, crises of cost of living, inflation and food security. This network of crises is hurting people disproportionately and exacerbating financial and social issues that, if left unaddressed, seriously threaten the future of our nation.

## Our Approach

The approach to this issue derives from a method of profound simplicity. This is not to be confused with simplification or the attempt to break down large problems into smaller ones. The problems we face here and elsewhere, in setting Malaysia on a course towards more prosperous futures, are complex and require complex solutions. Therefore, our thinking must remain complex and acutely aware of the

complex map on which we are working. But a recollection of basic economic principles and even elementary foresight will significantly make the situation around food security, inflation, and cost of living better. The SCRIPT approach also invokes the reinforcement of balance – particularly in avoiding reactionary and radical moves and shifts – as well as a concern for the human element in these matters delivered through humane economics. Where lack of planning leads to half-cocked, short-term, quick fixes, we must now balance short-term and long-term solutions to alleviate the pains of the present while constructing more convenient and advanceable futures.

## Target Populations/Areas

Similar to the SCRIPT approach to a post-Covid Malaysia, the targets here represent a starting point towards a society-wide move. Therefore, all ministries within the government must take seriously the economic crises addressed here and play their role in advancing the solutions suggested. The critical targets for the policy we build to navigate the cost-of-living crisis must remain those most immediately and drastically hit by it – the poorest in Malaysia. The increasingly liquid Malaysian middle class also requires our attention along with rural heartland communities. Business and finance leaders as well as farmers, middlemen, marketplaces, vendors, and the consumers must be considered throughout the whole farm-to-table process. We must keep a keen eye on imports and exports and target Malaysia's role in a variety of international trade regimes.

## Policy Imperatives

To overcome the mounting economic crises presently plaguing Malaysia, that hinder any recovery from the collective trauma of the recent pandemic, a SCRIPT analysis of the problem must take into account a variety of viewpoints and worldviews from as many layers of society as possible. The policy created using this framework must balance the needs of the people by enabling the critical actors in their optimised areas while also exploring ways to cross between various sectors and build stronger, holistic momentum for change.

“ Malaysians of all races, religion and geographic locations need to believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that they have a place under the Malaysian sun. ”

Sultan Nazrin Shah, The 2007 Young Malaysians' Roundtable Discussion on National Unity and Development in Malaysia



## Economic/Financial

Theoretical and practical approaches to the economics and finance will require revision across the board and must be open to cooperation that transcends silos and innovation that takes us beyond our comfort levels. The policy formed to tackle the present economic crises also serves as the first step in testing and implementing a more humane economics in Malaysia. The markers and policies that see this through will grapple with the introduction of care and compassion, respect, and trust into economics along with a renewed and revised look at prosperity. At the same time these sectors will need to move beyond reactionary approaches and inculcate forward thinking, long-term resolution while taking care of short-term needs. If we want the economic recovery we need, more sustainable and innovative approaches will be necessary, and this sector will need to kick off the conversation that propels the action needed.

## Legal

Many of the traps we find ourselves in with the present economic crises arise out of poor upholding of the law and a failure to revise and strengthen regulations concerning essential aspects of our economic wellbeing and critical features of our national survival. The legal sector will have to review and abolish outdated codes and devise innovative legal structures to cut down on endemic societal corruption and empower the farmers, fishermen, and the poor. Tighter punishments and fines will be required to deter corrupt and exploitative practices and the collected fines should be redirected into those who were hurt and for the betterment of Malaysian society. New legal approaches to agriculture and consumer economic harmony should also account for impact management, environmental protections, and international laws and customs.

“ The law must develop and grow. We should not be insular but expand our horizon by looking at case law of other common law jurisdiction as well. We should then adopt what is most suitable to us in the Malaysian context. ”

Sultan Azlan Shah, *Changing Face of Legal Research*, Official Launch of Lawsearch, 1989

## Institutional

A calculus will be required to break down and do away with bloated and corrupt institutions that have exploited wealth from, and condemned the future of, our nation. We will need to innovate new institutions to fill in gaps left behind and enact new ideas around our national approach to agriculture and the consumer to fortify our economy. As the institutional ecology changes in relation to this issue, greater cross- and interinstitutional cooperation should be engendered as well as a societal approach to taxation and funding that should always seek to eliminate poverty from Malaysia. Institutions should empower the individual and demonstrate a new culture of restraint, environmental concern, and betterment for all Malaysians and the nation.

## Educational

Economic crises are often left for academics to ponder. This places societal concerns on the plates of economists who are unreasonably expected to save the day. But both economists and academics in general are facing the same problem: the increasing irrelevance, if not the collapse, of dominant paradigms. We therefore need to find new ways to think about economics, based on humane, compassionate, and sustainable considerations, focussed on collaboration rather than unbridled competition, and bring them into academia and the classroom. We need to teach humane economics, along with environmental issues, at primary and secondary levels of education. Moreover, we need to motivate our universities to engage in advanced agricultural research and improve our education by innovating techniques, skills, and career pathways to enhance new thinking and innovations. New research centres and institutions should be looking to balance technological interventions with local and indigenous wisdom to take our agriculture to its optimal potential.

“ the term humane economy... does pose a theoretical challenge. What is the humane economy based on? Is it Humane, Humanistic, or Humanist economics? All three varieties would then get bogged down with the social, economic, intellectual, and political experience of western Europe since the Enlightenment. The same challenge also appears in Anwar’s call for the creation of Masyarakat Madani – Civil Society. One must also keep in mind that, as an avid reader, Anwar’s outlook was influenced not only by Islamic scholars, but also from alternative, and sometimes radical scholars, based in the West who were also critical of the liberal market economics of capitalism. The overall emphasis on ethics and morality, good governance, accountability, and free from all forms of exploitation and abuse, with the ultimate aim to establish justice, was very clear in Anwar’s [early] phase. ”

Mohamed Aslam Haneef, 'Anwar's Economics', 2021

## Social

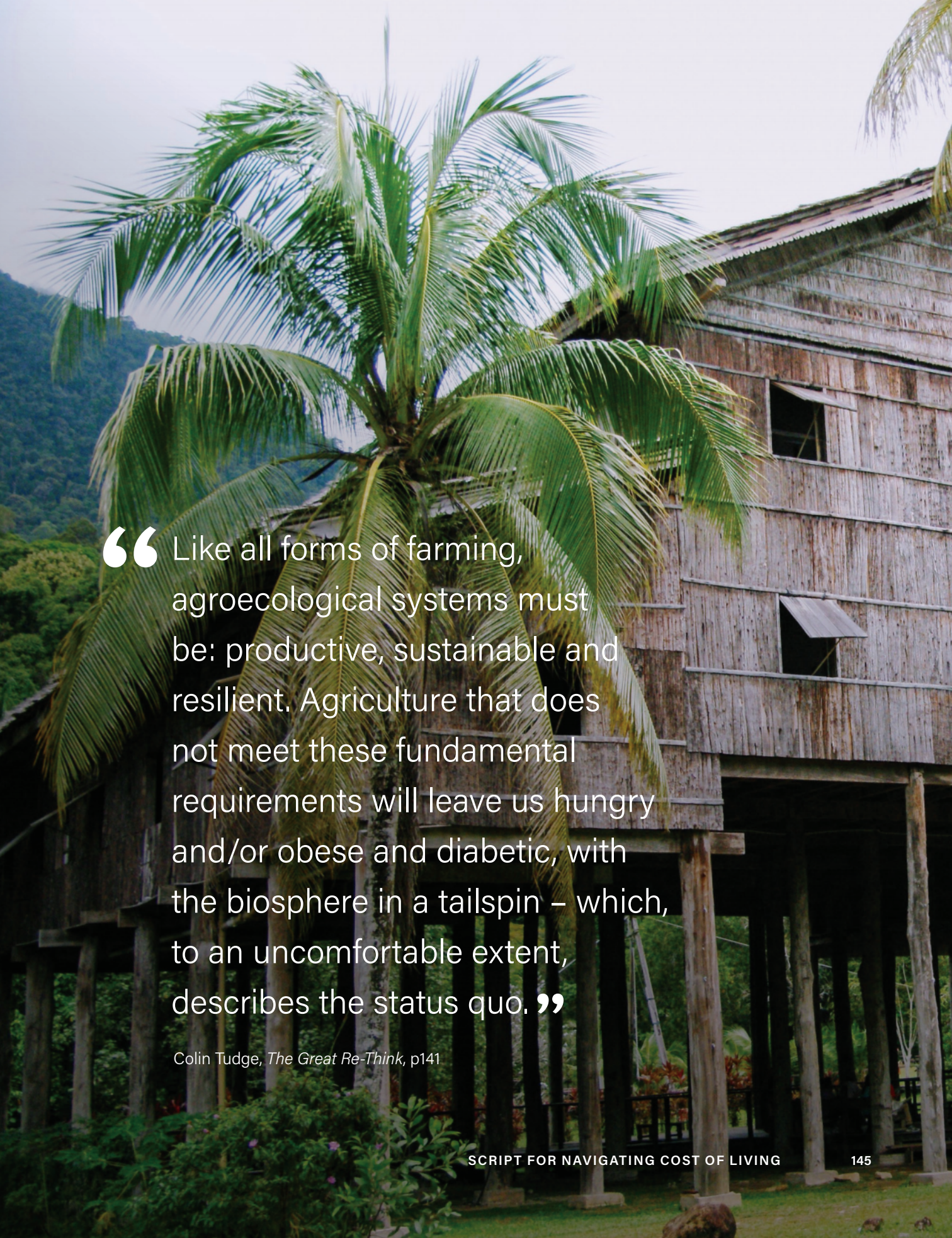
For SCRIPT policies to go beyond the government's traditional reaction solutions and have a lasting effect, they will require societal action and empowerment. Measures should be taken to improve social nudging towards more conservationist practices in daily life. Individuals and groups should all do their part in cleaning up Malaysia, reducing waste, and reducing their carbon footprint. Humane economics is heavily dependent on Malaysian society adopting the values of care and compassion, respect, and trust into their lives, their homes, and their workplaces. Action to improve social cohesion will also build up confidence in the Malaysian economy which leads to great empowerment of the people to pursue their economic goals.

## Cultural

Coexistence with nature, respect for the planet and our fellow man, and standing up to corrupt practices have always been shared cultural elements across the rich diversity of Malaysia. This cooperative tendency needs to be extrapolated into blending new innovative ideas and the wisdom found in indigenous ways. More than ever all walks of life must come together and urban and rural communities must help each other as organisations and groups take up their societal duties of balancing out our economy as we move beyond the hard times of the past few years. A culture of philanthropy and giving back to the community should partner with the embodiment of care and compassion to kick start an economic revolution that will be sustainable and rewarding to all now and into the future.

## Urban

Malaysia's urban centres have become hubs of consumerism, energy expenditure, environmental degradation, and the hyperbolic 'hustle-and-bustle' of neoliberal society. This does not have to be our fate. Our urban areas can instead blend modernity and tradition while remaining globally competitive, comfortable, and sustainable. Urban centres can still be lightning rods for success without also being the root of planetary destruction and national hardship for those in the rural regions. We must transform our cities to embody a Malaysian style of urbanism that allows for the newest as well as the traditional, while also coexisting with nature and improving the well-being of not only city-dwellers but even rural communities. Urban centres need to be made more accessible to rural areas so that Malaysia becomes a balanced network of economic progress as opposed to its present



“ Like all forms of farming, agroecological systems must be: productive, sustainable and resilient. Agriculture that does not meet these fundamental requirements will leave us hungry and/or obese and diabetic, with the biosphere in a tailspin – which, to an uncomfortable extent, describes the status quo. ”

Colin Tudge, *The Great Re-Think*, p141

trickle-down structuring (where the wealth never quite seem to make it to the bottom). The wealth and risks of our nation should be shared by all communities, equally, if we hope for these policies to succeed.

## Rural

Malaysia's rural areas are facing a silent existential crisis and it is incumbent upon us, for our survival as a multicultural and diverse nation, to make sure they can prosper in thriving communities. The voice of rural communities must take the lead and show the other parts of Malaysia how we can save our nation from planetary calamity and economic depression. Culture and technology must be negotiated to deliver the needs of those outside cities while preserving their preferences and giving them greater independence from others alongside agency over their affairs. Greater cooperation between urban and rural centres needs to be established to enable easy mobility between the two and decrease the inequalities that have been out of balance for far too long. Meanwhile, it will take a collective effort of rural and urban spaces to seek energy alternatives and new approaches to development that unleash the full potential of our nation.

## Postnormal Dimensions

The full extent of the postnormality involved in our present economic crises remains to be understood. Without a doubt, the long-term unresolved issues following the global Covid-19 pandemic, ongoing conflicts including the Ukraine-Russia War, and trade/land disputes and their impacts on supply-chains will all need to be kept in mind when developing policy for and working in the murky waters of the issues at hand. These macro concerns should also be balanced and enhanced with the microconcerns of the realities people face – of which, our present systems and institutions lack deeper and more critical appreciation. Keeping the postnormal conditions of our present economic crises in mind will not only enable a more profound understanding of the problems, but ensure that we construct durable and sustainable solutions that last well into the future.

## Complexity

Economics in general, as well as here in Malaysia, is in for a rude awakening if it does not take complexity into consideration. We have an opportunity to rethink

economics, a field that has been upended on numerous occasions by emerging implications of complexity. If our economic thinking is not sufficiently complex in its outlook and actions, then the scourge of current malaise will continue, and we will face a host of unintended consequences. If our economic policies can respect the complex state of the world, understanding that this complexity will only increase with time, then we can balance issues of local and global impact, individual and communal effect, end the current cycle of futility, resolve the issues of cost of living and inflation, and move forward to prosperity.

## Contradictions

Neoliberal economics has been exposed left, right, and centre for the promulgation of its inner contradictions which have left many countries with neoliberal economies facing rampant inequality as well as abused and raided national resources. As the de facto form of capitalism practiced around the globe, it thwarts every attempt at delivering prosperity to all citizens. We must reassess our economic theories, practices, and institutions to transcend the numerous contradictions evident in the notions of development, progress, equality, equity, freedom, and power. At the same time, we need to zoom in on the contradictions that have dominated Malaysian economics and public policy to target our systemic problems while battling the immediate aftereffects.

## Chaos

A lack of acknowledgment of chaos in our contemporary times, an inability to work in situations at the edge of chaos, and ignorance towards growing complexity and contradictions, which increase the emergence of chaotic events, are large contributors to the economic crises we face. The policy we form in dealing with these economic crises must take due regard for chaos so that we can mitigate unintended consequences. Meanwhile, we need to broaden our field of view to make sure our institutions and policies are not overly bloated, inefficient, or overcomplicated so that we can actively reduce the conditions in which chaos thrives. We must also anticipate the chaos that will arise from the vast revisions and reformulations needed to take on the pressing crises, along with the introduction of more humane economics, to make sure the policy proposed navigates us towards the preferred futures of all Malaysians.

## Simultaneity

The plural nature of the issues which comprise our present economic crises alone infer the need for simultaneous thinking, action, and navigation if we hope to improve the condition of our people. But the simultaneity we need to consider goes much deeper as we must work both in short-term solutions and long-term goals (expanding our definitions of both at the same time), as well as with the considerations of a diverse population, in both urban and rural spaces, and with regards to domestic economic stability as a part of and in the wave of global trends and emerging issues. This will require concerted, collaborative, and cooperative assistance from multiple sectors and the active participation of the whole of Malaysian society to see out.

## Futures/Change

Throughout the formation of SCRIPT policy to tackle the economic crises of cost of living, inflation, and food security, futures must be infused into the process. Futures and foresight practice and insight will greatly improve the longevity of the policies proposed and assist with unthought and unseen directions. Division units within a variety of institutions and organisations should be tracking and analysing trends and emerging issues while developing scenarios to help us better imagine our desires and preferences. This will be critical for balancing the various viewpoints at play in Malaysia without reducing any of them. Likewise, the navigation of technological assistance and solutions will require next level futures thinking to tackle future issues down the line. Futures should be inculcated into the general consciousness and culture of Malaysia to ensure its survival and prosperity.

## Monitoring

Monitoring will be make or break to the SCRIPT policy approach to solving the economic uncertainties and crises related to cost of living, inflation, and food security. The first key step is to have the Department of Statistics consult Malaysia's economic experts to reset and define certain economic markers (such as the poverty line, the reality of T20/M40/B40 standards, liveable wage, etc.). With better understanding of the reality in Malaysia, we can deal with the issues at hand more effectively. From there we will need technological and innovative solutions for reporting and establishing feedback loops that instil greater agency and work quickly in times of hardship. Continual reiteration will be needed to establish markers

for evaluating Malaysia's humane economics, particularly focusing on the monitoring of care and compassion, respect, and trust that will be pivotal for the Malaysia we will build together.

## Enabling Institutions

The following policies listed here take a revised approach to the economic crises facing Malaysia, making up for the flaws in conventional policymaking. These policies embody the SCRIPT framework, accounting for our new approach, Malaysia's perspective, and the postnormal dimensions to the problems we face.

We will begin by introducing a new fair windfall and corporate tax regime that can be exempted through socially beneficial philanthropy and donations or government cooperation agreements that target poverty alleviation, public education, and public health. We will also grant rebates on electricity, gas, and water services matched to the taxes necessary to stabilise public utility spikes. In continuing to balance the economic factors at play, we will cut tax on petroleum, reconfigure the petrol import/export scheme to reduce exports to stabilise domestic prices without shocking our international partners, offer rebates to verified car-poolers, mass transit users, and households that demonstrate reduction of household vehicle to person ratios.

To better understand the real problems encountered in Malaysia, we will announce a revised poverty line, cost-of-living-standard, liveable/minimum wage, and other economic indicators, and reset our monitoring and reporting to see more clearly the economic issues befalling the rakyat. It will be crucial to revise household debt, cancel FELDA settler's debts, forgive crippling student debts, and cancel unjust debts accrued during the pandemic while working with financial institutions to extend moratoriums and reduce rates as part of a Debt-Escape Empowerment Plan. Looking towards our future, we will secure funding through corporate tax write-offs and donations to restore Employees Provident Fund (EPF/KWSP) withdrawals made for emergency pandemic relief. For immediate relief of high prices, as exemplified by the solution I proposed to the recent rising price of palm oil, we will introduce a 10% policy where an export of a good spiking in price is reduced by 10% to saturate the market while an economic task force seeks innovative, long-term solutions should they be needed to stabilise the market.

Within the government, we will review the present positions, offices, task forces, and committees charged with managing Food Security with the aim of improving our reserves, and implement new policies to build a more sustainable agrarian market and supply in Malaysia. Critically, we will revise the national agricultural and energy

policy frameworks to take a whole-of-Malaysia approach, accounting for the needs and benefits of all with a special focus on neglected areas, in particular the rural heartland, Sarawak, Labuan, and Sabah. Parallel to these policies, we will launch an initiative partnered with the relevant Ministries, financial institutions, technology and communication companies, and local farmers, to deliver the technology and infrastructure needed for agricultural development, and grant farmers greater financial independence that streamlines the farm-to-table process and reduces cost burdens and other risks. As part of this, we must also begin negotiations to eliminate middleman corruption and abuses.

In Parliament, we will review and reform or introduce new legislation to allow for agricultural tourism, farmer assistance with farm to market, regulating middlemen practices. We will also begin a review of Malaysia's subsidies with regards to consumer products aimed at granting agency to farmers and fishermen while providing the necessary assistance. Given that Malaysia has been without it for too long, we will establish a pension and hardship relief fund for farmers and their families with emphasis on providing healthcare services and upward-bound education. Importantly, we will initiate anti-monopoly and trust-busting measures to break up agricultural gatekeeping and mafia formations.

To embolden our process of improving our knowledge base and problem solving faculties, we will establish new universities, schools, and research institutes to innovate current practices, reassess agriculture and land allowances, better integrate technological agents (smart farming), and explore food futures (genetic modifications, lab-grown meats, revolutions in diets, advanced halal considerations, etc.).

To engage the societal shifts needed to balance our economic, environmental, and sustainable needs, we will create a national compost collection scheme that encourages and educates about urban and rural composting to reduce the cost of fertiliser imports, the system can be incorporated into a renovated national waste management service that collects rubbish, recyclables, and used goods suitable for donation. It is also key for us to encourage stronger urban-rural partnerships that builds cooperation with rural farmers and underutilised urban spaces (rooftops, carparks, green spaces, etc.) that can be converted into localised farming spaces and/or localised alternative energy hubs.

We will also announce a plan to move Malaysia's energy resources away from coal and towards indigenous energy sources with an emphasis on solar, wind, hydroelectric, and other alternative energy sources. Officially ending Malaysia's era of coal colonialism. To assist in this effort, we will implement new regulations and schemes to retrofit public light consumption, shifting public electricity use to

renewable, localised energy sources, include energy saving mechanisms during day-light hours, and push a reduction in hours of night-time lighting. To ensure our efforts are not in vain, we will impose harsher punishments for siphoning and cutting subsidised goods and reorient the fining scheme to give back to farmers.

To ensure that the government does its part, we will task the Ministry of Transportation with implementing and prioritising coherent policies that improve and enhance public transportation in Malaysia, working with local and city leaders to propose new routes, civic renovations, hybrid and alternative automobile fuels, policies to reduce the number of automobiles on the road, and encourage public transport usage. Yet, it is also important to establish an inter-ministerial working group tasked with revising international trade policies to improve Malaysia's self-sufficiency without provoking protectionism or isolationism, looking for new regional markets Malaysia can tap into, and improving existing trade partnerships around the globe.

Since our situation can change rapidly, we must be adaptable and open to learning from mistakes and successes. This is where the suggestions, ideas, and discussions of the rakyat are important. We need the input of the Malaysian people to see the SCRIPT framework through as it navigates us towards greater successes and a brighter future for all in Malaysia.

# Priority Policies for a Better Malaysia

The following reservoir of policies allow us to begin taking action towards a better Malaysia, guided by the SCRIPT framework. Not all of these will necessarily be implemented, and all are subject to change as circumstances change:

- Reconfigure the Ministries to optimise SCRIPT actualisation, balance portfolios, and reduce superfluous ministerial salaries and expenses
- Each Ministry will need to develop a road map or strategic plan to address ongoing concerns and to implement SCRIPT within their portfolios
- Initiate a broad-spectrum Human Rights Audit
- Initiate an Environment and Sustainability Audit
- Abolish tolls for the B40 (provide them with digital 'Toll Passes') and begin a review of toll schemes for the M40 and T20
- Abolish FELDA settlers' debts
- Abolish repayment to the National Higher Education Fund Corporation for the B40
- Review ongoing projects on the basis of cost to the rakyat as well as their impact on the environment and people's standard of living, with consideration for Malaysia's future
- Begin a systematic tax reform overhaul by raising taxes, along an increasingly staggered scale, for those earning RM 11,000 and above monthly
- Launch Green New Deal legislation
- Announce SCRIPT based Recovery Plan that empowers the people's economic agency, bolsters the tourism industry, and stimulates foreign direct investment

- Introduce legislation to establish a living wage that provides the means of basic economic survival for all
- Announce development plans and special fund allocations for affordable, humane, and sustainable flat-pack housing that targets lower income families and individuals as well as migrant workers
- Establish a Leaders of National and Local Governments, Communities, and Business organisation that equally represents Malaysia's rich diversity and is tasked with developing a scheme for staggering working hours and holidays to reduce congestion and makes for flexible and balanced working conditions that respect Work from Home alternatives and employee well-being
- Establish a national fund for innovation to provide funding, grants, and scholarships for developing innovative approaches to economics and business practices and with the responsibility to turn unused and underused malls into 'tech cities,' incubators, and cultural innovation hubs to generate and promote digital enterprises
- Announce plans for large solar and wind farm projects as well as localised penetration plans beginning with the poorest states – Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Sabah, Sarawak – complete with training centres, apprenticeship schemes, and research facilities
- Launch the development of infrastructure for electric cars
- Announce plan for an Educational Curriculum Reform with a focus on history and language education to make Malaysian education more competitive
- Change the Constitution to limit premiership to two terms
- Initiate e-democracy, between citizens and politicians; and accountability and quality audits in ministries
- Establish, through legislation and institutional reform, greater judicial independence and police oversight and accountability
- Reform oversight and accountability institutions to more effectively target endemic corruption in Malaysia
- Reform the tax and fees schemes across Malaysia to redirect fines and procurements towards the people's needs (e.g. education, healthcare, public services, etc.)

- Introduce legislation and infrastructure to better define and recognise peoples, communities, and their rights that were previously undefined (migrant workers, refugees, etc.)
- Establish firm legal protections for Malaysia's flora and fauna, environment, and future
- Introduce a quality assurance scheme in universities
- Announce plans for the overhaul and modernisation of the university system including the creation of industry relevant degrees with focus on new and emerging technologies, the establishment of new and emerging disciplines, and including new outlooks and approaches to economics required to navigate uncertainty and turbulent times, preparing Malaysia's higher education system for the futures ahead
- Establish rural centres as well as a university centre, in appropriate institutions, for the study and exploration of Agriculture 4.0 and other farming innovations (smart farming, use of GPS for soil scanning and data management, hydroponics, algae feedstock, use of drone technology, seawater farming, crop diversification, etc.)
- Establish independent research centres and institutes, with direct links to industry, on different aspects of Industry 4.0
- Establish Rural Innovation Development Centres in appropriate regions
- Develop a nationwide, futures literate healthcare system that accounts for mental and physical health needs and public health needs as learned from the failures of the Covid-19 pandemic, that applies SCRIPT to employees and patients, and embodies a forward-thinking approach to research and development seeking new specialisations and innovative pharmaceutical and treatment approaches
- Introduce a national healthcare assistance system, or appropriate national health insurance scheme
- Introduce a broader social pension scheme that accounts for farmers, families, and innovative or transforming workspaces (e.g. the gig economy)
- Establish a body to promote corporate philanthropy and announce funds for NGOs to promote sustainability, care and compassion, and respect
- Establish a network of art and craft cooperatives throughout Malaysia
- Introduce a scheme for innovative forms of tourism such as eco-tourism



“ We must remain constant in our objectives and never compromise our principles and ideals. ”

Lim Kit Siang, former Leader of the Opposition in Malaysian Parliament

“ God does not change the conditions of a people unless they change what is in themselves. ”

The Qur'an, 13:11



# Epilogue

So begins a much-needed transformation of Malaysian society. It is a conscious attempt to empower all Malaysians in their vast diversity, and in the creation of an equal and inclusive platform for deliberative democracy spanning Malaysia's rich past, its uncertain present, and in pursuit of its preferred futures. And it is an endeavour that involves all citizens. The spirit of Reformasi lives on in all of you and we cannot forget the energised dynamism of the 14th General Election. While the first PH government fell short of our expectations, we must remember that twenty-two months is wholly insufficient for the job that was laid before us, which required nothing short of a systemic overhaul. That type of reform takes time and the individual leading that government was not a reformer. Nevertheless, our hope does not die so easily and together we have protected the flame of hope. Soon it shall shine bright again for all to see as the moment remains before us, where Malaysians are not only given an opportunity to continue evolving towards a better democratic process and governance, but to set a new global standard.

The framework put forward here is not the final word; this document is an amalgam of living and ongoing policies, subject to revision and continual reiteration, as things change and as we change things. SCRIPT offers a reservoir of policies and, to some, it will be overwhelming. Naturally, not all of them can be implemented at once. This project will take time. Through success, and it has to be recognised, sometimes failure, we strive for a change that can be seen and witnessed by all. We will work systematically – apply the policies most relevant to a particular time and context – adding, or indeed subtracting, from the reservoir when circumstance change – as we know they will. This methodology puts to rest the era of petty fights for the seats of power in our nation, moving us beyond money politics and rhetoric saturated with racial prejudices whose perpetuation is merely the continuation of colonialist policies in all but name, as has been elucidated time and again from Jose Rizal to Syed Hussein Alatas. Now we begin a new discussion and take informed action. The SCRIPT framework seeks to engage all Malaysians and invites them to embrace their own futures and work together as a society to attain our cherished, common goals.

The SCRIPT policy detailed here is not radically new. As previously stated, 'new' has lost its flare and meaning. Instead, SCRIPT is the next chapter. Like all good succeeding chapters in a grand narrative, it is emboldened with the sophistication of having reflected upon and learned from the lessons and trials previously penned. And finally, you the people will pen the history our grandchildren will read. Through embracing complexity, understanding chaos, and transcending contradictions, the empty promises and failures of yesterday are addressed in order to usher Malaysia into its next chapter. By casting a foundation in sustainability, a caring and compassionate society, a revived culture of respect, with the spirit of true innovation, we will move together towards prosperity for all, guided by the light of trust in each other.

# Acknowledgements

The SCRIPT framework is a culmination of over four decades in public service and many years spent thinking about our nation and its future. Over the course of eighteen years in government, heading numerous ministries, the seeds for many of these concepts were planted and first expounded in my book *The Asian Renaissance*. My attempts to change our corrupt system from within resulted in confrontations that landed me in prison, where I spent nearly half of the last two decades in solitary confinement. But this gave me plenty of time to read and take copious notes – matching my own experiences with countless other minds across fields of inquiry, time, and geography from east to west. The Reformasi movement as well as the negotiations and discussions that brought about Parti Keadilan Rakyat, Barisan Alternatif, Pakatan Rakyat, and Pakatan Harapan have all assisted in the formation of and giving life to the vision developed here. Finally, following the historic 14th General Election and my release from prison, it was time to take all of my scattered notes, diaries, and previous writings, and formulate them into a viable plan for giving Malaysia the change it voted for in 2018. I brought together an esteemed collection of thinkers, strategists, economists, legal experts, political scientists, and futurists; and we worked, for well over a year, to develop the SCRIPT framework through a series of workshops and retreats. While we faced a number of setbacks - with the Sheraton Move, the Covid-19 Pandemic, and other crises that have ensued since – we continued to learn and reiterate the details, adjusting the framework to emerging issues and changes. This is a process I hope Malaysia as a nation can also adopt to meet the challenges of the future.

My gratitude goes out to all those who sent me books and reading materials to fill my time in prison, you too are a part of this document's development. I wish to thank the late Welsh anthropologist and writer, Meryll Wyn Davies – a great ally of the people of Malaysia - for her friendship, counsel, and assistance in the early stages of this policy framework. Regretfully, she never got to see it published. I am grateful, much more than I can express, to Azizah, our children, and, of course, our grandchildren, who are my anchor in this increasingly uncertain and chaotic world of ours. They remind me of what we are doing all this for.

Finally, this work is most emphatically dedicated to the people of Malaysia and the better futures I know we can build together. I hope this work can call upon future generations so that they may do even better than we did with the time afforded to us. In this spirit, I invoke the words of a great Malayan, Jose Rizal, as written in his celebrated novel *Noli Me Tangere*:

“ I do not write for this generation. I am writing for other ages. If this generation could read me, they would burn my books, the work of my whole life. On the other hand, the generation which interprets these writings will be an educated generation; they will understand me and say: ‘Not all were asleep in the night-time of our grandparents.’ ”

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“ Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing  
and rightdoing  
there is a field.  
I'll meet you there. ”

Rumi



Anwar Ibrahim is the former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Malaysia and currently President of KeADILan (Justice Party), Chairman of the opposition coalition, Pakatan Harapan, Chairman Emeritus of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), and Chairman of the Center for Islam in the Contemporary World (CICW). His prior ministerial appointments include the Ministry of Education, Agriculture, and Culture, Youth and Sports.

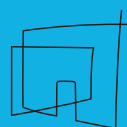
During his career in public service, he held various positions including Honorary President of AccountAbility, Advisory Board Member of the International Crisis Group, Chairman of the Development Committee of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and President, General Conference of UNESCO. He has also held teaching positions at St. Anthony's College at Oxford University, School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

“ We must now move beyond empty and selfish pursuits of power, the myopic prejudices of the past, and the complacent shady money politics that has taken hold of Malaysia. It is time we act for the best interests of our nation and all our people. We seek not so much to create a new Malaysia, in the refreshing brand-tested comforting definition, but a radical improvement – an evolution. Through strong and truthful leadership, my government will not only lead, but walk with its citizens, facing the trials of growth and carving out a solid ethical framework for its actions. It will stand for and with the citizens, holding itself accountable to all mistakes and misguided pursuits of the past and present. Dedicated to the highest levels of transparency, rooting out corruption and irresponsible practices, it aims to empower people and engage them in a great polylogue aimed at promoting prosperity for all. ”

From the Introduction



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