

The Way to a Better Future for All

A Manifesto

State Reform Party, Sarawak

(STAR)

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Foreword

Our common future and destiny are in our own hands. What we do on polling day will determine the future we shall have. On that day, we shall sow the seeds for our tomorrow. What we sow then shall be our harvest for the next four or more years. It is that simple mark on the ballot slip that shall determine the future of Sarawak, your future, and that of your children and grandchildren. It is that small action which can build or ruin our future.

I therefore appeal to all my friends to ponder on the four main reasons on why a political reform is necessary at this point in the history of our beloved Sarawak. This is also a time to remind ourselves of the original meaning of Democracy as espoused by Abraham Lincoln - a Government **of** the people, **by** the people and **for** the people. It is vital for the people to have a full say in the Government of the day to ensure:

1. The sustenance and continued existence of the good things we have today;
2. The establishment and development of the good things we have yet to get today and the removal and riddance of all the bad things existing today;
3. The sustenance of the self-respect and esteem of all individuals;
4. The sustenance, enhancement and development of the respect and image of both Sarawak and Malaysia.

Only with all the benefits, the self-esteem of individuals and the good image of each community can we progress further to become the nation we can truly be. We can then build on all the natural resources and the human potentials we possess today efficiently and effectively.

I am grateful to a number of friends who have helped in crystallizing the aspirations and vision of STAR, the State Reform Party. My sincere thanks is also due to all friends and supporters for the encouragement and support, especially those who dare to pave the way for me at this trying hour. To all of you, God bless.

To fellow Sarawakians who also dare to stand up and be counted despite the insurmountable odds, thank you for the courage to move together with us for a better and more progressive Sarawak.

Follow the STAR - the way to a better future for all.

Hon. Dr. Patau Rubis

Member of Parliament (Mas Gading),

President

State Reform Party(STAR)

Introduction

The Party is committed to a total or holistic development of the State to enable it to become an important and active player of the developed Malaysia as envisioned in the “Vision 2020”. The Party’s definition of development does not just cover physical development but it includes personal, psychological and social aspects as well as ensuring full justice and fairness to all people in the State.

The Party is committed to quality service to the people of the State, both by the Government and the Civil Service. The role of the Government and the Civil Service is to serve the people, and to help them achieve their aspirations and goals. The Civil Service shall be neutral and shall be the executor of Government’s policies and not be a mere appendage of the ruling Party. At the same time the Government will lead the people and the State, to develop new roles, values, and solutions to face the challenges of the new Century.

The Party subscribes fully to, and will practise the tenets of cleanliness, efficiency and trustworthiness in all its affairs and will ensure that the Civil Service does the same.

The Party supports fully the visions and aspirations of the Federal Barisan Nasional and will work very closely with the Federal Authorities to develop the State along the concept of total development to ensure the full participation of all sectors.

The Party strongly supports and shares the vision of the YAB Prime Minister as embodied in the “Vision 2020”. This document presents a brief overview of the Party’s plan for the State to address the nine challenges put forward by the Prime Minister in realizing “Vision 2020” for the country. This document explains the Party’s beliefs, its definitions and concepts of the key components and aspects of the challenges described by the Prime Minister. The document also briefly describes the proposed measures that the Party will implement to address these challenges.

Challenges

- 1. To establish a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and full and fair partnership, made up of one Bangsa Malaysia with political loyalty and dedication to the nation.***

The Party believes in “Unity in Diversity”. The Party does not believe in homogeneity. The cultural, ethnic and social diversity that the State has now will be maintained, sustained and encouraged through due and appropriate recognition and awards. What is important is that all citizens profess full, unconditional loyalty to the nation and the State voluntarily.

The Party believes that a united nation is based upon steady mental attitude and an adoption by the people of a national value system. It is neither based upon ritualistic and physical behaviour, nor upon intermittent, compulsory and expensive public displays of loyalty and patriotism.

The Party believes that loyalty and patriotism cannot be forced upon the people. It can only be inculcated. People must believe in the system and execution of governance, and believe that the system is proper, fair and equitable to them. Therefore fair and equitable implementation of the laws and fair and equitable implementation of development are important and key components in establishing a united nation and state.

The Party fully subscribes to the notion of a “Bangsa Malaysia”. The “Bangsa Malaysia” is based upon the aspirations of everybody in the country. It does not belong to, and is not based upon any particular group. It is a mental model that embodies all the values that drive and sustain the nation towards and beyond achieving developed nation status. It is a status which every Malaysian will ascribe to with pride and dignity.

Since the creation of Malaysia in 1963, there has been great achievement in nation-building. Compared to many former colonies that are still wrought by internal conflicts even today, Malaysia is a model in nation-building. There is a greater awareness and appreciation of the people of the different cultures and regions within the country. There is definitely very close and good interaction among the various groups. Malaysians now identify easily with universal causes such as the environment, AIDS, the arts, etc., that transcend cultural and regional barriers.

However, we cannot take these achievements for granted. The progress that has been achieved in nation-building needs to be maintained, sustained and developed. We still have rudiments of parochialism and regionalism that need to be addressed with diligence.

In the State, development is unevenly distributed, and its benefits unevenly shared. Favouritism and victimisation exist in the governance of the State. These elements are not conducive to the development of a patriotic and loyal citizenry in the State. It also sows the seeds of discontentment, disillusionment and dissatisfaction.

In order to enable the State to play its part in the development of a united Malaysia, the Party will implement the following measures:

- Introduce and sponsor voluntary programmes to help Sarawakians master the use of the national language.

- Introduce and sponsor programmes to encourage cross-cultural and cross-regional interactions among the people. The Party will also work closely with the Federal and other State Governments on such programmes.
- Cooperate with the Federal Government to develop a national value system that emphasizes nationalism, and to review and re-emphasize the “Rukun Negara” in the development of the State and country.
- Promote equitable and fair development in the State, and eliminate any form and practise of favouritism and victimisation in the state
- Introduce and sponsor programmes to explain and introduce the concept, objectives and aspirations of “Vision 2020” among the people, beyond mere sloganeering.

2. Creating a psychologically liberated, secure and developed Malaysian society with faith and confidence in itself, justifiably proud of what it is, of what has been accomplished, and robust enough to face all manner of diversity.

The Party believes that the psychologically liberated individual is the basis of a psychologically liberated nation. Every citizen must be psychologically free to speak out his or her opinions on a matter that affects the individual, the community, and the country.

Since independence, Malaysia has achieved high standing and great respect in the international arena. This has boosted tremendously the people’s beliefs in themselves as a nation. This is greatly due to the economic and social achievements of the Federal Government and its neutral and moral stance on international issues.

The State does not have a psychologically liberated citizenry. People are still stifled by a pervasive culture of fear and intimidation and are afraid to speak out. Distribution of the State’s resources and development is tied closely to subservience to the Government.

The Party will eradicate the culture of fear and intimidation and the culture of political enticement and patronage in the State to encourage individuals to speak out for their rights, especially when infringed. The Party realises that the Government is not infallible on all matters affecting its constituents. The Party also realises that the intellect and contributions from the people, for the people, will be its greatest asset in realising a psychologically liberated nation.

In order to achieve this, the Party:

- Will introduce and encourage programmes to inculcate values and self-esteem among the people, and to encourage the people to be responsible for their own future. The Party will introduce “meet and listen to the people” sessions unlike the current situation when “meet the people” sessions are merely conduits for the Government to force its plans upon the people.
- Will also ensure equitable and fair distribution of the fruits of development to ensure that the people can rightly have pride in the State by allowing merits and economic needs to be the determinant factor, thus lowering political bias.

3. *Fostering and developing a mature democratic society, practising a form of mature consensual, community-oriented Malaysian democracy that can be a model for developing countries.*

The Party believes that the Government must have openness and transparency, so that the people can see and judge for themselves the workings of the Government. The people must be allowed to take responsibility for issues that affect them, and the Government has a duty to listen to the needs of the people.

The Party believes that in a community-oriented democracy; there is no hegemony or tyranny by the majority. The needs of minorities and individual will be respected in this form of democracy.

The Party believes that in a democratic system, there should be no place for personalities and cliques. The system should be based on institutions and procedures that can withstand personality changes.

In the State, transparency and openness are not fully practised.. For example, the people do not know how the State's riches are distributed and they are not fully informed or consulted on matters that affect them, e.g., development projects which affect their livelihood, lifestyles and environment. This has perpetuated a culture of fear of speaking out which is reinforced by the Government issuing retributions with impunity. There is a real lack of dialogue and discussion of central socio-economic issues by the people and the politicians. There is only talk of "development" which, to the present Government, is a reward for political loyalty and patronage. Thus the State is far from practising consensual democracy even though the trappings are there.

Many of the institutions in the State are run by cliques and personalities. The State Government itself revolves around a particular personality, whose sycophants never fail to congratulate him on the anniversaries of his long reign. We have had the Sarawak Economic Development Corporation run almost as a personal business by a personality linked to the Government. The State Civil Service is not spared political patronage and personality cliques that look after the interests of its own over official concerns.

The Party believes that the Government should be responsible for nurturing and sustaining democratic beliefs and ideals. The Party will organise and sponsor public forums and debates on matters pertaining to major development projects and other matters that affect the people.

The Party believes strongly that the Press plays a very important role in checking out abuses of power and in disseminating and nurturing democratic values and traditions. The Press shall not be controlled, and the Party shall promote fair and just journalism. The Press shall be responsible to the people of the State, not to the Government of the day.

Government leaders shall be subject to greater checks for abuse of power. For example, Government leaders, like anybody else, shall have a public accounting of their wealth.

The Party believes that the Civil Service also plays an important role in developing and nurturing democratic values. The Civil Service shall be the implementor of the policies of the Government of the day. However, the Civil Service shall be neutral and shall be allowed to follow and to express their political beliefs without any fear of punishment.

The Civil Service shall be reviewed to eradicate the formation of cliques and "closed buddy" systems, especially at the top echelon. Progressions in the Civil Services shall be based on a system of merits, not of patronage and favours.

In order to achieve this, the Party:

- Will allow newspapers to be censored only by the public and the readers.
- Will not bar individuals from entering Sarawak on political grounds.
- Will not protect political corrupts.
- Will establish procedures and mechanisms to reward performance in all sectors.

4. *Establishing a fully moral and ethical society whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual values and imbibed with the highest of ethical standards.*

The Party believes that strong ethical and moral values are needed to balance material and physical development. The Party believes that religion is a very important element of an ethical and moral value-system.

The Party believes that, in addition to religion, the moral and ethical system should also be based on universal values that are acceptable to all people.

The Party believes that the adoption of ethical and moral values should be self-policed, and should not be coerced upon the people.

The ethical and moral system in the State seems to have worsened since independence. Even remote rural communities are not spared as people become more individualistic and materialistic. This is compounded by the fast-paced development and emphasis on physical development by the Government.

In order to achieve this, the Party:

- Will develop and inculcate a system of universal, non-partisan ethical and moral values that is acceptable to all, in order to reinforce and support the religious system.
- Will encourage the formation and development of mass movements such as Scouting, the Red Crescent, the "Rakan Muda", etc. to cater to all segments of the society. These mass movements will become vehicles for the inculcation of ethical and moral values.
- Shall practise full ethical and moral behaviour in the processes of government. Government leaders and Civil Servants will be required to "lead by example" and to show exemplary ethical and moral behaviour; and
- Will introduce awards to recognise and to reward ethical and moral contributions to the society.

5. *Establishing a matured, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds are free to practise and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and feeling that they belong to one nation.*

The Party believes that tolerance is a keystone in the progress and development of a plural and multi-ethnic society. Tolerance should include tolerance of minority views and opinions.

The Party believes that for the proper and just development of the State, it is necessary to develop, the ability to give and to take criticisms in the society.

Tolerance in all its form has improved tremendously since Independence. There is greater appreciation and understanding of the different cultures and social systems in the country. The country is also ever-increasingly exposed to foreign values and norms. This has led to an even greater understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the human and social organisations, both inside and outside the country.

However, there are some threats to liberalism and tolerance lately. There has been growing religious fanaticism. There is also a distinct lack of political tolerance and liberalism in the State.

To achieve the above, the Party:

- Will not only emphasise social and cultural tolerance and liberalism, but also political tolerance and liberalism.
- Will introduce programmes to highlight the cultures and practises of the different peoples in the country to ensure social and cultural tolerance.
- Will discourage religious fanaticism by encouraging, sponsoring, and highlighting inter-religious and inter-ethnic functions and interactions.
- Will encourage political tolerance and liberalism. People, regardless of their political beliefs and extremist affiliations, will be encouraged to speak out on their concerns, and needs to the Government. The Party shall abolish the culture of fear, favouritism, and political patronage, and
- Will lead by example. Political Government leaders will have to show and practise cultural and political tolerance and liberalism.

6. *Establish a scientific and progressive society that is innovative and forward-looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology, but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilisation of the future.*

The Party believes that the individual is the basis of a technologically progressive and scientific society. A scientific and progressive society requires that the individuals and be allowed the freedom to think, and be critical when necessary and be able to make decisions rationally, based on empirical and objective criteria. It requires that the individual be mentally and psychologically liberated.

The Party believes that technology should serve only the needs of society. Technology should only be used for peaceful and harmonious purposes. Technology should not be used to harm the individual, the society, and the environment.

The Party believes that the education system and the system of government and leadership in the State are important in establishing and sustaining a scientifically oriented society in the State.

The country is now a model in technology development and application among the developing countries of the world. However, the country is a net importer of technology and technology exports are very small

compared to technology imports. The country is also heavily dependent upon foreign investments in technology.

The State is behind many other States in this field. It lacks even basic infrastructure for large areas in the State. The State's development and growth strategy are based on the exploitation of natural resources, with very basic use of technology. The State has failed, when compared to more progressive States, to attract foreign investments in technology.

The Party believes that the private sector plays an important part in developing a scientific society. The private sector will be encouraged to apply technology in its processes. The Government will be involved in basic scientific research that the private sector can commercialise for their own application and export. The Party will introduce programmes to undertake intensive and coordinated research in areas that are strategic to the State, such as Agriculture, Information Technology, and Timber Processing.

The Party will also encourage the development of a scientific community in the Civil Service. Currently, the Civil Service is biased against the scientific community in favour of the Administrators. The Party will ensure that the scientific community is represented in the top echelon of the Civil Service. The Party will ensure that the leadership of the Civil Service shall not be the exclusive domain of the Administrators, but that it be open to technocrats as well.

In line with the Party's belief that the liberated individual is the basis of a scientific and progressive society, the Party:

- Will promote and practise open government. The people will be encouraged to analyse, critique and contribute to the plans and policies of the Government.
- Will also encourage programmes to inculcate scientific and progressive values through the education system. The Party will maximise the use of Minor Rural Project (MRP) allocations in the development of rural schools, to ensure that they are not left behind in the teaching and use of technology. The Party will encourage the participation of parents and local community in the development of such schools, for example through the Parent-Teacher Associations. Such an approach has been successfully implemented to improve the performance of primary schools in Bau District to make it one of the top performers in the State.
- Will develop good infrastructure facilities such as roads, electricity, and communications, to ensure that all population centres have access to the use of technology to encourage the use and adoption of technology within the state.
- Will also ensure that the Civil Service will use technology optimally all its processes to provide quality service to the people.
- Will develop and implement programmes to encourage continuous education that is not limited to formal schooling. People should be encouraged to continually educate and improve themselves.
- Will establish a State-funded university to cater specifically to the State's needs. Ninety percent of the places in this university will be allocated to the State. The university will focus on scientific research and development, and will focus on other areas of strategic importance to the State.

7. *Establishing a fully caring society and caring cultures, a social system in which society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the State or the individual, but around a strong and resilient family system.*

The Party believes that the caring values should be self-policed by individuals in a society as opposed to being enforced upon them.

The Party believes that caring values should not only be applied to members of the society but also to the environment. The society should not only care for its members but also for nature.

In the fast-pace of modern living, it is becoming easier to forget caring values. The family unit is also under tremendous pressure from the requirements of modern living. People have less time to spend together in the family.

Toward these ends, the Party:

- Will introduce programmes to inculcate caring values. The Party will ensure that under-privileged and the handicapped are taken care of, so as not to leave them to resort to vagrancy and begging. The Party will also ensure that the care and provision of needs of these people will not be left to the efforts of volunteers, as the case is now. The Party will also introduce programmes to turn such classes into contributing and useful members of the Society.
- Will also stress the importance of the environment. The Party will introduce programmes to inculcate love for the environment. The Party will also ensure that development projects do not adversely affect the people and the environment, and
- Will ensure that the political leaders and the Civil Service show exemplary caring behaviour for the members of the society as well as for the environment.

8. *Ensuring an economically just society. This is a society in which there is a fair and equitable distribution of wealth of the nation, in which there is full partnership in economic progress.*

The Party believes that the State's resources belong to the people, and its fruits should be distributed to the people.

The Party believes that everybody should be given equal opportunities to achieve what he or she desires, within the bound of acceptable social ethical norms.

The State now is practicing a form of plutocracy. In the process, the rich are getting richer, as the State's natural resources are further plundered and dwindled. The rural folks are getting the poor end of development projects, that only serve to perpetuate and to widen the gap between the rich and the poor. Among the elite in the State, there is no racial discrimination. They are united in their hunger for wealth. State institutions such as the SEDC, STIDC are used to channel the State's resources to individuals and political leaders, and not to serve the people.

To redress the current situation, the Party:

- Will introduce some form of discriminatory policies to redress the situation. These policies will not be based upon ethnic groupings, but upon meritocracy, to uplift the poor. It will ensure that the wealth of the State is more equitably shared among the people. The Party will introduce more trust schemes and organisations to share the State's wealth with the people. Institutions such as ASSAR, and the SEDC will be modified and strengthened to be more emphatic to the wishes of the people. The State's wealth will be channeled for the public good through such institutions, and not to individuals.
- Will encourage participation of the people in economic activities through the establishment of self-help groups such as Cooperatives and, as mentioned earlier, through State-sponsored trust bodies such as ASSAR and the SEDC.
- Will ensure equitable development between the urban and the rural areas. The Party will bring the conditions in the rural areas closer to those in the urban areas by implementing better basic infrastructure for the rural communities, as exemplified in Bau District and,
- Will combat any form of corruption and will ensure that the political leaders and the Civil Service show exemplary behaviour. The Government will be open, transparent, clean and trustworthy.

9. *Establishing a prosperous society, with an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.*

The Party believes that fair and open competition is the basis for developing a prosperous society. Political leverages and interference must be reduced especially in consultancy and contract works to allow competency, effectiveness and efficiency to evolve naturally.

The Party believes that for the economy to be competitive and resilient, it has to be diversified.

Currently the State's economy is based mainly on the exploitation and export of raw materials. These are non-sustainable and are dwindling. The State does not have a diversified economy as those in other State in the country.

To establish a prosperous society, amongst other things, the Party:

- Will open the State to foreign investments to foster competition and culture of quality and excellence. The spirit of competition will also be applied in all processes of Government and the Civil Service. The Party will not allow any form of nepotism, favouritism, and patronage in the Government and the Civil Service,
- Will develop new areas such as Electronics and Information Technology to encourage the diversification of the economy. At the same time, the Party will encourage downstream processing and value-adding business to complement the current wholesale exploitation and export of the State's natural resources.
- Will encourage healthy competition among contractors, suppliers and distributors in all sectors of the economy, and
- Will introduce schemes and programmes to allow more entrepreneurs to compete on a level playing field.

Conclusion

The Party supports the aims and objects of 'Vision 2020'. It fully supports the Federal Government in trying to develop Malaysia to be a fully developed and mature nation and will work closely with it to realise the targets of 'Vision 2020' for the state.

The Party believes in leadership by example, and will stay above board in all its activities. It will not tolerate any form of corruption, nepotism, favouritism and patronage, within the Government and the Civil Service.

The Party believes that the sole duty of the Government and Civil Service is to provide quality service to the people of the State and to protect the rights and properties of the people.

The Party believes that the role of the Government is to represent and to consolidate the wishes of the people of the State, and at the same time, to lead the State to the best possible future.

The Party believes that the concepts, ideas and programmes outlined in this manifesto are necessary for the State to meet future challenges and to bring the State to a higher plane of development.

The current approach of development in the State is exploitative and inequitable that is focused on the quick creation and accumulation of wealth by a few individuals at the expense of the whole State. It is based upon greed, and on pure exploitation, with little or no enhancement or value-adding, of the State's natural resources. It is based on the intimidation on the people and the suppression, concealment and distortion of important information from the people. This mercenary and political approach is not suitable, will bankrupt the State, cause social disorder, and will destroy the State's social and natural heritage.

The Party believes that a new approach is needed to bring the State into the 21st Century, to turn it into a vibrant, rich, progressive, liberal, democratic, just and equitable State that will be a model for the other States in the country to follow. The Party's manifesto is the way to the future, a future with a free, liberal, open and caring society. A society that caters to the needs and harnesses the potential of the individual, the family unit and the whole society. A society of happy citizens that safeguards the social and natural heritage of the State. In short, the Party is the only way to the future for the State. Any other vision of the future for the State is not worth thinking about.