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27th December 2009 - This morning, I received a letter from one of my buddies in a very nice envelope printed by POS Malaysia. The front and back faces of the envelope show miniature of people from different races holding hands together in jovial mood. That envelope really animated in me a refreshing sense of being a Malaysian. Obviously, the message is very clear – Malaysia pride itself as a multi-racial country and diversity of people is the facet of our community. The watchword here is ‘diversity.’

The Malaysian community could be best described as a garden. We are a small garden of people in a garden of the people of the world. But this small garden is blessed with flowers (people) of so many different colors that make it look beautiful compared to other gardens with only one or two types of colors!

Indeed, diversity is our strength!! We are comfortable with having people of different races as our relatives, neighbors, buddies, friends, colleagues and classmates. Respect and acceptance of each other is something that comes very naturally in us. We enjoy celebrating Hari Raya, Chinese New Year, Deepavali and Christmas every year. Most of us are able to speak two or more languages. We are accustomed and sensitive to the different cultures of our friends of other races. We live our everyday life together, we accept that all of us are one inseparable community, and we call Malaysia our home. We have come a long way in building this bond of unity and we have also gone through many challenges together as a community.

The political development in recent years could be easily viewed as another challenge to us but it could also be viewed positively as an opportunity for the community to evaluate how the bond of unity and harmony could be strengthened. The central element in strengthening unity and harmony is justice. Our bond of unity and harmony should be based on justice. Justice should be the guiding principle in all the efforts of development and governance, as only equitable system and policies shall command the genuine participation of all peoples. When justice is central to life of the community, it encourages cooperation and reciprocity among each other which helps foster spirit of unity and harmony.

If we have unjust elements in the system and policies, it causes imbalance or unhealthy development that subsequently polarizes the society. Just like how we take care of a garden. If we give equal care to each flower in the garden irregardless of its color or species, make sure each of them receives those elements necessary for growth, and unreservedly protect their sustenance and well-being, we will have a beautiful garden with flowers that spring up fresh and shining. But if only certain types of flowers in the garden are taken care of while the rest are neglected, we will have many sick flowers that make the whole garden look awful and potentially affect the growth of other flowers too. This imbalance or unhealthy growth of the flowers greatly distorts the garden's potential of being a beautiful garden.

Such a beautiful garden is the vision for our community and as we move into a new year, we might want to have a resolution to contribute our little part to make this vision a reality.

Happy New Year 2010!