

# An open letter to all Malaysians

Malaysia is a multiracial, multilingual, multicultural and multireligious country. Nevertheless, ever since the dawn of nationhood, there has been a gross disregard by the government to acknowledge the Malaysians' rights of learning and using their mother tongues as enshrined in the country's Constitution. Instead, the authorities have been implementing monolingual educational policy that does not conform to the country's unique characteristics as a multiracial country.

Since the "Razak Report 1956" sets out "one language, one medium" as the "ultimate objective" of the country's educational policy, subsequent education reports, Education Acts and education blueprints, etc have adhered to this monoracialized view as the "ultimate objective." The recently launched Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Preliminary Report (hereinafter referred to as the "Blueprint") has taken a step further towards realizing this objective.

The "Blueprint" continues to underscore the government's monolingual educational policy with the ultimate objective of changing the nature of Chinese and Tamil primary schools. The "Blueprint" has proposed that Chinese and Tamil primary schools adopt the same Bahasa Malaysia curriculum, teaching materials and teaching methods as National Primary Schools from Standard Four to Six, and has hence drastically increased the teaching hour of BM to 570 minutes each week. This will result in an inequilibrium in the curricular structures of the Chinese and Tamil primary schools, adversely affecting the functionality and nature of vernacular education.

The "Blueprint" advocates access to education for all and striving to improve education standards.

However, it has failed to stipulate that fair and equitable treatment should be accorded to religious schools and Chinese independent high schools. It has also ignored the government's commitments towards National-type secondary schools and mission schools. More so, it has failed to recognise the status and development of Chinese independent high schools and in particular the remarkable long-time contributions they have made towards nation-building, with the ulterior motive of excluding them from the country's mainstream education system.

Apparently, the adoption and implementation of the "Blueprint" are contrary to the principles of fair education and detrimental to the development of multilingual education. Since the "Blueprint" impedes national unity and the establishment of a harmonious society, it must be firmly opposed.

At a time when vernacular education is on the brink of extinction while our erstwhile ways of fighting for our deserved rights have been largely unsuccessful, Dong Zong is of the opinion that it is imperative for us to stand united and take the next course of practical actions to express our strong will to preserve and advance vernacular education in this country. As such, we are calling for a peaceful assembly of petition at 11.00 a.m. on November 25 (Sunday), 2012 at Padang Timur (opposite AmCorp Mall), Petaling Jaya, Selangor, with the hope of uniting Malaysians of all races, from all walks of life, from different societies as well as from different political affiliations, to stand up against the "Blueprint" which is detrimental to multilingual education and national unity.