



## **Statement by the Economic Club of Kuala Lumpur (ECKL)**

As it worsens, the COVID-19 pandemic is both revealing and creating extraordinary challenges to our nation's health care system and public health infrastructure.

Since the beginning of the pandemic more than 18 months ago, there have been more than 1.3 million confirmed cases, and more than 11,000 deaths across the country. With the number of new cases increasing recently, the pandemic is also creating a substantial economic loss, with millions of Malaysians experiencing unemployment and food and housing insecurity.

Against this backdrop, the Economic Club of Kuala Lumpur (ECKL) supports the call of the Prime Minister for bi-partisan support in our fight against the COVID19 pandemic. Political stability is very important in our fight against a pandemic. We are aware that the road to recovery of this country is not an easy journey. Therefore, we believe that with the support, efforts and focus of all parties to restore and return this country we love to a healthy path of development and growth is not impossible.

We believe that if the political situation is not stabilise to aid the recovery process, it is the Rakyat who bears the burden. The Rakyat stand the most to lose from such political instability and lack of focus on their well-being. MPs and both sides of the House should put their differences aside and come together to put the Rakyat's wellbeing front and centre. After all, Members of Parliament as elected representatives, are mandated by the people of this country to serve them. Their interests and that of the country should be paramount above all else.

ECKL also welcomes the increase in the COVID-19 Fund ceiling to help meet additional needs in overcoming the COVID-19 crisis in terms of strengthening the healthcare system, improving assistance to the people, and supporting business sustainability. ECKL had also recently submitted recommendations for re-opening the economy to the Minister of Finance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity for parliamentary reforms to take place. The Parliament is a living institution that should be the centre of a rapidly changing national public life. Practices of Parliament should reflect the changing needs. Malaysia adopted the Westminster Parliamentary framework of government at its independence in 1957 and the first Parliament convened in 1959.

ECKL believes that strengthening parliamentary reforms by ensuring that the number of Government and Opposition MPs in the Parliamentary Select Committee is more balanced will ensure that all Members of Parliament can play a more effective check and balance role through their involvement in these committees.

The proposals by the Government to limit the term of office of the Prime Minister to only two terms, an Anti-Party Hopping Bill and the implementation of **Undi 18 without waiting for the implementation of automatic registration** through Constitutional Amendment is welcomed by ECKL as timely as it promotes transparency, accountability, and due diligence. We hope that the members of Parliament from both sides of the divide will come together to give bi-partisan support to these constitutional amendments.

ECKL believes that the proposals are practical ideas and should be supported for the good of the country and the Rakyat.

Regardless of the deep policy disagreements, Parliament must operate with mutual respect, decency, and civility – all of which are foundational to forging collaborative solutions. The Parliament is the ultimate avenue for the policymakers to uphold the interests of all Malaysians.

ECKL believes there is more that unites us than the political and ideological differences. As elected officials, Members of Parliament all have a responsibility to address challenges confronting their constituents and the nation, as well as strengthen the institution itself.

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