

Liow: Youth the key to nation's progress

SERI KEMBANGAN: The youth will be key to Malaysia's development in the next three decades, says MCA president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

"Why are youth events so important? For gathering the strength of young people to help our nation grow. I have walked the same path as you many years ago. I can tell you, your journey will not be lonely. There will be a lot of people who will support you along the way," he said during a Chinese New Year dinner organised by the Eight Major Chinese Youth-based Organisations (Emco).

Liow pointed out that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak launched the National Transformation initiative (TN50), where the youth will have its say in shaping the nation for the next 30 years.

"Today's society is an information-based society. Today's youths have knowledge, confidence and unprecedented access to information. We need more youths to be a part of politics in the next 30 years. I hope more of our youths can participate in TN50 to voice out their opinions and constructive criticisms on how to transform Malaysia," he added.

Liow recalled that when Vision 2020 was launched in 1999, it was seen as a distant goal. "But now, we are almost at 2020. This is why we need to plan 30 years ahead, and get the young people involved," he said.

He added that Malaysia's transformation was also on the right track in terms of its economy, politics, infrastructure and cultural development.

To justify his statement, Liow pointed out that despite global economic uncertainty, Malaysia's GDP grew at 4.2% last year – 1.1% higher than the global average.

"Complemented by the rise in commodity prices, our economy is expected to grow further this year, between 4.5% and 5%," he said.

To help boost the economy, Liow urged youths to take part in the digital economy by harnessing the power of e-commerce.

"Youth leaders need to guide the young to be involved in e-commerce, which has the potential to help our economy reach double-digit growth.

"Our Prime Minister has invited (China e-commerce giant) Alibaba Group founder Jack Ma to have a dialogue with young people next month. I hope everyone can attend with an open mind, and make full use of the opportunities available to strengthen our economy. I hope all of us can gather our strength to help build this nation together," he said. Later, Liow presented Emco RM100,000 to support its activities.