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Food Production Committee to boost output

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The MCA, together with the Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industries Malaysia and the Federation of Chinese Assembly Halls of Malaysia, today set up a Joint Food Production Committee to boost food production.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, in pledging the party's support for activities undertaken by the National Economic Action Council, said today the committee's first objective would be to identify suitable areas, such as ex-mining land, for the cultivation of food crops.

On Thursday, the Umno Supreme Council, chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had recommended the formation of the council to seek ways to overcome the country's economic problems. It would be supported at the State level.

It would also monitor closely the country's economy and devise strategies to overcome problems and facilitate growth.

Dr Ling said Acccim agriculture committee chief Datuk Lim Fung Chee, FCAHM president Datuk Ng Teck Fong and MCA Economic Bureau chief Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn would co-ordinate with heads of the State Agriculture Committees "to quickly crystallise some firm ideas".

"We hope to focus our attention on food production by mobilising the expertise of our members.

"These three individuals will have the power to co-ordinate and we will let our people on the ground, namely the party's State Executive Council members, Assemblymen and MPs, know so that they can respond quickly if called upon," he told a Press conference after chairing an emergency meeting.

Dr Ling, who is also Transport Minister, said the meeting had discussed the challenges facing the country and their implications on the economy. The discussion included the currency and stock market problems, industrial and agriculture sectors, food prices, wages, goods and services, and tourism.

He said Acccim, whose members include manufacturers, would also take steps to increase exports, keep wages low and ensure competitiveness in the world market.

"We will decrease imports to save foreign exchange and, at the same time, accept all belt-tightening measures.

"We are also willing to sacrifice and face short-term difficulties so that the country can gain in the long term.

"We will go all out to assist the Government as outlined by Dr Mahathir. And once we are ready, we will present the ideas to the Prime Minister and all the Menteri Besar," he said.

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