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Boost ties with business community, financial sector told

THE Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (Acccim) president Tan Sri Wee Boon Ping yesterday called on the financial sector to strengthen cooperation with the business community to create a beneficial situation out of the present economic predicament.

In a statement released in Kuala Lumpur, Wee urged the commercial banks to take heed of the advice by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to lower the effective lending rates and to step up financing of viable and productive enterprises.

"To date, there have been too many allegations that banks withdraw or reduce credit lines, refuse to provide financing facilities and set high effective lending rates.

"The regional financial crisis has adversely affected the performance of the Malaysian economy," Wee said.

He added that the one major factor that brought on the market recession was the tight credit control measures of the banking system.

"Despite the projected credit growth of 15 per cent this year by the government, the business community is still facing great difficulties in obtaining loans and credit facilities from the banks.

"This has greatly affected private sector performance in all sectors of economy," Wee said.

He stressed that the proper role of the banking system is to work closely with entrepreneurs to ensure that the nation's engine of growth functions effectively and not to stifle it.

"Commercial banks in particular should not practise protectionism at the expense of their clients. It would result in a loss-loss situation," Wee added.

Meanwhile, Wee reiterated Acccim's whole-hearted support to the Government under the leadership of Dr Mahathir in overcoming the nation's economic predicament.

He also criticised certain foreign influences for their actions by way of currency and stock market manipulations as well as negative media reports aimed at disrupting the political stability and economic growth of the nation.

Wee called on Malaysians of all races to take heed of Dr Mahathir's advice to strengthen unity and consolidate internal strength in striving for an early economic revival.

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