

25/11/1998

Chinese guilds back economic measures (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia today pledged support for the Government's measures in maintaining political stability and bringing about economic recovery as soon as possible.

In expressing their support for the Government in defending the dignity and sovereignty of the country, the association also pledged "its commitment to uphold the rule of law and the Constitution".

The association also declared that it was against foreign interference in the country's internal affairs.

The pledges are part of an eight-point memorandum presented by FCAM when its delegation called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's Department yesterday.

The delegation comprised representatives of 13 State Chinese Assembly Halls led by FCAM president Datuk Chong Chin Shoong. The 13 halls have more than 2,000 Chinese guilds and associations with over 100,000 individual members.

While the FCAM itself was established in 1991, some of its members like the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, are more than 75 years old.

The association issued a Press statement through its chief executive secretary Lai Kuan Fook today. Other points raised in the memorandum are:

"We support the measures taken by the Government to impose currency exchange rate controls and related financial activities and we hope these measures will produce the desired results. But once the objectives are achieved we hope that the Government will remove the controls.

"In this economic downturn we have discovered that the agriculture sector has not been developed to its fullest potential. We wish to appeal to State Governments to open up more land for Malaysians of all races, so that we would speed up agricultural development to benefit the country.

"We appeal to the Federal and State Governments to provide land, infrastructure, financial assistance and the training of manpower to support the small and medium industries in the country.

"We hope that there will be more dialogues between various departments of the Federal Government, State Governments and various organisations in the country.

"We think that these dialogues will bring about consensus between the government and the people. We are of the opinion that these would contribute to build a more healthy, harmonious Malaysian society."

The association also listened to Dr Mahathir's briefing on the current political and economic situation.

The association also appealed to the Government to build more Chinese primary schools and provide more places for parents who wish to send their children to these schools.

"We also urge the Government to train more teachers to fill the existing vacancies in many of these schools."

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