

Malay chamber sets up club for young entrepreneurs

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THE Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia (MCCM) has set up **Dewan Muda** (Young Entrepreneurs' Club), a move prompted mainly by the lack of awareness of the upcoming challenges of globalisation among young entrepreneurs.

Dewan Muda chairman Azlan Shah Jaffril said the club was designed to cater for the needs of male entrepreneurs aged between 18 and 35 years.

"The main thrust of **Dewan Muda** is the creation of an effective mechanism, including ways and means to create more young Malay entrepreneurs who are ready to take up the challenges of **Afta** and the WTO," he told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

According to Azlan, most entrepreneurs he met were not knowledgeable about **Afta** (Asean Free Trade Area) or the WTO (World Trade Organisation) or understood the possible impact of globalisation.

He said **Dewan Muda** also expected to address longstanding problems of Malay entrepreneurs, including lack of unity and a strong business networking nationwide.

He added that **Dewan Muda** would be interacting with other entrepreneurs' clubs nationwide with the view of creating a more united fraternity of Malay entrepreneurs.

"From here I hope we can start building the network," he said.

According to **Azlan**, **Dewan Muda** will provide members access to business contacts, awareness seminars, dialogue sessions with ministries and banks, and updates on business opportunities and the government's financial aid schemes.

Azlan said **Dewan Muda**, which was set up last July under the chamber's restructuring programme, would be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the **Putra** World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur on Jan 11.

"We have already set up branches in every state and will embark on a membership drive after the club's launch," he said.

According to **Azlan**, the **Dewan Muda** committee does not expect the membership drive to be a brisk one, but it would not go for conventional ways to lure members.

"We are not here to promise anyone any government contract," he added.

Instead, MCCM is offering free membership to eligible entrepreneurs for the next six months.