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Ka Ting to chair his first CCM tomorrow

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Newly-elected MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting will chair his first central committee meeting this Friday, with discussions expected to centre on party unity.

The agenda includes consolidating the position of leaders in the fractious Youth wing, and how to bridge the gap between the movement and the parent body.

"The dates for the State MCA conventions will also be finalised and endorsed at the meeting," a party leader said.

"The conventions will be a good platform for central leaders to bring the message of unity across to the grassroots."

By tradition, all conventions are opened by the president. The deputy president and most central committee members are expected to attend.

This year, the State conventions are to be held in July. The general assembly will be held on Aug 16, and the Youth assembly likely a day earlier.

Ong, elected president on May 23 along with Datuk Chan Kong Choy as his deputy, had pledged to attend all State conventions to talk to the grassroots on the need to close ranks and concentrate on the next general election.

The source said the central committee meeting may direct States to organise programmes, such as hosting dinners, to foster unity among grassroots divided by the Team A-Team B rivalry.

Ong had appointed a three-man committee last week to resolve problems in the Youth wing.

"Also expected to be discussed are proposed amendments to the party constitution, including limiting the tenure of the party president to three terms," the source said.

"Preparations for the general election and the party general assembly may also be discussed."

Ong and Chan took over from Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek respectively when they tendered their resignations simultaneously, on May 23.

The changing of the guard in MCA is part of the peace plan brokered by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to bring unity to a party wracked by possibly the worst internal rivalry in local history.

Ong and Chan have received the support of the grassroots for pledging to put aside their differences.