

'Vernacular students speak better Malay than Umno'

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DAP national organising secretary Anthony Loke today said the party's convention today has proven that leaders who studied in vernacular schools could even speak the national language better than Umno.

Loke said this after party delegates were encouraged to deliver their speeches in the Malay language, which most did.

"Umno said that people who studied in Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools cannot speak Malay language fluently.

"There are many delegates who studied in Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools today but their Malay language was fluent.

"We encouraged delegates to use the national language to prove to Umno leaders that DAP can speak better Malay than Umno," he said in his winding up speech at the convention.

However, Loke (left) noted that Chinese-speaking veteran members who were older than 80-years-old complained they could not understand "90 percent" of the speeches.

He assured that the party will try to provide translation services for them in future conventions.

Loke said the party was previously labelled "Chinese chauvinist" for using Mandarin in its convention but the party today had grown inclusive.

Fully Thai branch

Earlier Perlis DAP chief Teh Seng Chuan surprised delegates as he delivered part of his speech in Thai, boasting that DAP even has a branch comprising fully of Thai Malaysians.

Hailing this, Loke said the DAP's diversity is a strength for the party.

In a separate matter, Perak delegate Leow Thye Yih, who is also Aulong state assemblyperson, opposed the party's plan to amend its constitution to include a 30 percent quota for women in DAP.

"If we impose quotas, how different are we from BN," he said, stating that the 30 percent women can be a policy target instead of a legally-binding quota.

However, in the winding up speech, several DAP leaders, including male leaders such as P Ramasamy, M Kulasegaran and Loke argued passionately for the quota.

"The 30 percent is an affirmative action, just because BN abused the bumiputera quota system does not mean affirmative action is not a good policy," said DAP Wanita chief Chong Eng (right).

DAP deputy national publicity chief Teo Nie Ching in her winding up speech joked that she would stand up for men if they were to go "extinct".

"Don't worry, I guarantee my male colleagues, if one day they face extinction in the party, I will be the first to propose 30 percent quota for men.

"I will fight for gender equality, not just for women's rights," she said.

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