

'Chinese community benefited from BN policies'

Malaysiakini.com

August 22, 2010

The success achieved by the Chinese community in various fields can be attributed, in many ways, to the policies of BN, former senate president Michael Chen said.

mca snoop squad hearing 140508 michael chen "I think, since Independence in 1957, the Malaysian Chinese are happy about the economy and I think they have contributed their fair share for the development of Malaysia.

"The loyalty of the Chinese to this country has been proven and of course the BN government has created stability and implemented policies which enabled them to make a good living," he told Bernama.

He said the government also provided various assistance which benefited the community including in terms of aid to Chinese schools, scholarships to Chinese students, religious freedom and fair distribution of economic wealth.

Chen was the political secretary to Abdul Razak Hussein in 1964. Razak was then the deputy prime minister and special functions minister, as well as the housing and local government minister.

Chen said despite all these policies, however, there still remained issues which needed further improvement.

"Compared to allocations given to national schools, the funds given to Chinese schools are insufficient to finance their development and maintenance," he said.

He said the Chinese community also gave importance to access to education and that the system of awarding scholarship had somewhat "taken them aback".

"Scholarship has always been an issue, even now. I think the government should try to put it right. The Chinese community feels that the offer of scholarship has not been quite fair to them. That is why they hope the government will improve the system.

"Why? It's because some felt that their children, who scored better grades than the others, had not been given scholarships. That is why the MCA is trying to appeal to the government to put it right and make the system fairer," he said.

NONE On the distribution of wealth, he said, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was a good policy in narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor but it had been "misunderstood and misimplemented."

The NEP, introduced by Razak in 1971, is a social engineering programme aimed at addressing economic imbalances among the races.

Chen said: "On the economic sector, I think as far as the development and the policies are concerned, the Chinese have worked hard to get a fair share but they are still unhappy and sensitive to the issues in the NEP.

"If you check history, the NEP actually is a good concept but now it's being misunderstood and misimplemented," he said.

He commended Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, describing him as a good leader who created great impact on the Chinese community and whose approaches were accepted by all.

Najib had been following the footsteps of his father Razak, the second prime minister of Malaysia, in getting closer to the people and in giving attention to their problems, he said.

"The 1Malaysia concept mooted by him is the continuation of previous approaches to ensure the country's economic pie is distributed in a fair and just manner," he said.

He hope that under Najib's administration, issues such as scholarship would be looked into seriously.

Corruption was another issue which the prime minister should address, he added.

upm student suhakam memo 211107 khoo kay kim
Meanwhile, historian Prof Khoo Kay Kim (right) said that although scholarships for Chinese students was still limited, the assistance given by the government to Chinese schools was commendable.

He also called on the government to consider appointing more people from the community to hold posts in government agencies.

"In the public sector, the Malays are given privileges and there are posts which are reserved only for the Malays," he said.

On religious and cultural freedom, Khoo said: "We have no problem in this aspect. Although Islam is the official religion, we are free to practise our religion... as we can see, temples and churches are common place in the country."

A senior lecturer at the Chinese Studies Department, University of Malaya, Ching Thing Ho said the government recognised the contribution of the Chinese community.

On the issue of scholarship, he said, students who were qualified and in need of assistance, irrespective of their race, should be given scholarship.

- Bernama

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