

**MCA hails Najib's relaxation of bumi equity quota**  
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MCA, the party which kicked off the latest round of debate on the 30-percent bumiputera equity in public-listed companies, is quick to welcome the easing of the quota restriction announced yesterday by prime minister-in-waiting Najib Abdul Razak.

Newly-minted party secretary-general Wong Foon Meng has described the relaxation of the requirement as a "good beginning to improve on the country's economic competitiveness".

"MCA's stand is very clear on NEP (New Economic Policy) - that it should be opened and liberalised gradually," reiterated Wong.

His party colleague, MCA vice-president Liow Tiong Lai had last month set the ball rolling by calling for the removal of the condition on 30-percent bumiputera equity in public-listed companies.

As part of the listing requirement, companies applying to be floated in the country's stock exchange, Bursa Malaysia, must have 30-percent of its shares set aside for bumiputera institutions.

malaysia stock exchange market klse 141008 04However, Najib as finance minister has yesterday made it easier for companies to be listed.

If the 30 percent of their shares are not taken up by bumiputera institutions - which are allocated to International Trade and Industry Ministry-approved companies - they can now be offered to bumiputera individuals.

And if the shares are still unsubscribed, these companies are then said to have satisfied the requirement and can offer their shares to non-bumiputeras.

**New policy to confront economic slowdown**

Previously, companies which are unable to meet the 30-percent quota because they could not get enough bumiputera institutions to buy their shares cannot go ahead with the listing.

parliament stimulus package najib 041108 pc 02"After the two cuts, if the shares are still not taken up, it is only fair to allow the companies to be listed. Otherwise, there will be a huge uncertainty for them," Najib was quoted by Bernama as saying.

Such relaxation is not new as the government has made similar policy during the financial crisis 10 years ago.

Securities Commission chief Zarinah Anwar said there are presently seven companies still waiting to fulfil the share ownership requirements.

She said the companies had met the commission and were given more time to fulfil the requirement.

MCA's Wong said the new policy was made due to the "economic challenges to be faced by the country".

"What is important now is for all parties in the country to concentrate on strengthening national unity as our main priority. Only then we would be able to enhance our ability to compete globally," said Wong.

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