

Diversity no obstacle to unity: MCA Youth

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PUTRAJAYA: Diversity is no barrier to unity, said MCA Youth chief Datuk Liow Tiong Lai.

"Malaysians have different cultures, languages and religions, but these do not hinder us from getting together. They make us more unique. Do not use them as reasons that we are disunited," he said.

He stressed that in spite of the different cultures, Malaysians should nurture the spirit of *Rakyat Malaysia* - the brainchild of the youth wing which is similar to the concept of *Bangsa Malaysia*.

"It is the spirit that we want to inculcate to make Malaysia strong," he said.

Liow said without such spirit, Malaysian society could be polarised.

"When we talk about *Bangsa Malaysia*, we are talking about Malaysians as a nation, as a race. We have to work together, using the unity and diversity to our advantage," he said.

"The *Bangsa Malaysia* model is built through integration (with) different races being together by having their own separate identities," he added.

Liow said he did not understand why Johor Umno chairman Datuk Abdul Gham Othman disagreed with the *Bangsa Malaysia* concept.

At the Johor Umno convention last Sunday, Gham described the *Bangsa Malaysia* concept as a "rojak" of races which was unacceptable.

He also questioned the government's meritocracy system, saying it was a form of discrimination and oppression against the Malays.

He said it was impossible to strive for meritocracy in the absence of equal opportunities for education for rural and urban Malays.

These views are expected to be raised at the Umno general assembly, which begins today.

Liow said the government should continue to come up with open policies to help the people, especially the

underprivileged who require government assistance to get out of the poverty cycle.

Liow, who is deputy minister of youth and sports, said he and the youth leaders representing other communities were worried about Malaysian youths' global competitiveness.

"Irrespective of race, I'm looking at it from a very general, open view and thinking as a Malaysian to help our people to become more competitive."

"I have even talked to (Umno) Youth chief Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein on how we can work together to make the younger generation more skillful, to unearth their potential, make them more confident and prepared to face the globalisation onslaught," he said.

Liow said he welcomed Hishammuddin's statement last Thursday that Umno Youth should not only fight for the Malay community's agenda but also take into consideration all the races.

Pork in Malacca, Selangor most tainted pg 10

