

Fireside Chat with Dato Paduka Timothy Ong "What's the Next Big Thing"

The Kuala Lumpur Business Club (KLBC) hosted a Fireside Chat on “What’s The Next Big Thing?” with Dato Paduka Timothy Ong, Chairman of Brunei Economic Development Board and Convenor of ASEAN 100 Leadership Forum on 29 September 2010 at the Shangri-La Hotel in Kuala Lumpur.

KLBC President Datuk Rohana Tan Sri Mahmood welcomed participants to the session and introduced Dato Paduka. She then moderated the session by saying that political landscapes of ASEAN countries have changed and posed interesting questions on what was going to happen to ASEAN and what ASEAN members should look out for.

Dato Paduka Timothy Ong started by stating that technology which was the ‘fruits of science’ would change everything - from DNA engraving to robotics to quantum energy. Politics, on the other hand would change slower than what was expected due to a growing disenchantment with it. A new kind of politics will emerge where it possibly would transcend public interest.

During his brief presentation, Dato Paduka Timothy Ong highlighted a few issues. The US must not be disregarded, as it is the most powerful magnet for the best talent in the world. It has the lowest brain drain and is indeed the capital of innovation. Following the global financial crisis, the US had recovered its position and is still the world’s strongest economy.

On ASEAN, he felt that ASEAN overall was facing a challenge of constant tussle between the national and regional interests. As such, government to government initiative was required to drive multilateral trade within the ASEAN nations. Dato Paduka stated clearly that ASEAN would continue to be important to the US as a model of moderate Islamic region and ASEAN Muslim countries should play a central role in that regional architecture.

In his conclusion, Dato Paduka said that Indonesia being the largest country in ASEAN would be the natural leader of the group. ASEAN countries must leverage on science and technology which is fast changing in order to remain competitive in the global arena.

The Fireside Chat was attended by 30 participants comprising KLBC members and invited guests.