

DISTINCTIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
**YB Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Maximus
Johnity Ongkili**

Minister of Science, Technology & Innovation, Malaysia

As Malaysia redefines its position in the global economy and prepares to leap out of the middle-income trap to high-income status, innovation has become a critical component in fulfilling this national agenda.

A series of comprehensive transformation programmes to move the nation and economy to the next level have been unveiled by the Government of Malaysia. However all plans are only as good as their implementation and would require the necessary leadership to cascade the aspirations into tangible actions that can be embraced by all.

Towards this end, the role of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, as one of the key stakeholders responsible for the successful migration of the Malaysian economy into an innovation-led high-income economy is pertinent. At its helm is a man who is no stranger to these monumental tasks. In fact he has been personally tasked by the Prime Minister YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Haji Abdul Razak to drive the implementation of the national innovation agenda.

Scientist and statesman championing innovation

Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili is among those rare scientists who have entered into political life and provide invaluable guidance at a time when the country is embracing the innovation agenda.

He is passionate about his task and is investing all his energy and scientific skills to help Malaysians embrace innovation and make it their culture and way of life. He began by rallying the nation declaring 2010 as the Year of Innovation and Creativity reaching out to all and sundry to be on board this national mission. Moving forward the year 2012 will focus on the National Innovation Movement to take the nation deeper into the transformation process.

A great believer in the ability of the common people to innovate, Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Maximus has mooted a series of actions to identify, locate and document innovation wherever it takes place.

Through his visionary leadership, he called for the establishment of Yayasan Inovasi Malaysia (YIM) and has set out several initiatives to achieve its objectives. By involving a corps of government officers to engage with all strata of society to unearth the multitude of grassroots innovations, he is moving bureaucracy to a new level. His intention in rooting innovations nationwide with commercialization in mind, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and its agencies are now positioned as strategic enablers for grassroots innovators to further fine tune their products for the market place.

A people person, genial and jovial in demeanour

As a person Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Maximus is a humble man whose pleasant, easy going nature reveals nothing of his tough childhood tending to his father's farm in a small village in Sabah which left him no time for school till he reached the age of 10.

Of Kadazandusun descent, an ethnic community in Sabah, he is a man who perseveres, applying determination and discipline to create the results he seeks. The best example of these characteristics is how he worked hard to make astounding progress in school, despite his late start, to win a Colombo Plan scholarship at the age of 21 to study agricultural science at La Trobe University in Australia.

He returned to Malaysia in 1985 with a degree in agricultural science and a PhD in agricultural economics to begin life as an academic with University Pertanian Malaysia (now University Putra Malaysia) and later as a senior researcher with the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS).

In 1987 he joined the Sabah Institute of Development Studies as Associate Director and rose up to hold the position of Executive Director cum Chief Executive of the organization in 1991.

He left in 1994 to enter the topsy-turvy world of politics building a strong reputation where his innate patience, integrity and loyalty continue to endear him to his electorate as well as those who work with him. Testimony to the high regard that the current government leadership has for him is his recent selection as Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reform.

For his outstanding leadership in championing the national innovation agenda the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology Worldwide feels honoured to bestow upon YB Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili the Honorary Doctorate of Leadership in Innovation.

