

# Looking Ahead Positively

by Chin Pei Ling



**JUST** spend a few minutes with newly-elected IEM President Dato' Ir. Lim Chow Hock and you can tell that he is a people person. From past Presidents to ordinary members, the secretariat and even the nation at large, none is left out in his pledges.

That said, the new President for 2014/2015 did not make his pledges without first realising the huge shoes he is about to fill.

"I must say that all the past Presidents have, cumulatively, laid a very strong foundation for the Institution and set it in the right direction," says Dato' Ir. Lim.

However, he is unfazed and says he is indebted to the invaluable contributions that the past presidents have made. He believes he needs to keep up the good work. "Obviously, it is incumbent upon me to continue the good work and take the Institution to greater heights. I pledge to do my best to uplift and maintain the good image of the Institution."

To achieve greater heights, Dato' Ir. Lim believes that IEM must – first of all – remain relevant to the members, the engineering fraternity and the nation. He says IEM should continue to be the sole, powerful and credible voice of the engineering fraternity. He will continue with the task of enlarging its membership, obviously, with the 100K vision in mind.

"To remain relevant, we must continue to represent the nation's engineers. The Institution exists to serve the members," says Dato' Ir. Lim.

"I will continue to look after the welfare of the members and to enhance their high standard of professional competency. We will carry on with aggressive and dynamic programmes to upgrade knowledge and skill and all members should take advantage of the training facilities available."

Dato' Ir. Lim acknowledges the power of social media in today's tech-savvy generation. To ensure that IEM's voice is heard loud and clear, he has pledged to promote greater and wider use of the social media, in particular the print and electronic media.

"As the Institution representing the engineering profession, we must be seen and heard by the public. We are always there at the forefront of nation building and our service must be noticed. That's my central message," says Dato' Ir. Lim.

He is quick to add that he does not mean unnecessary public attention. "No, we are certainly not going to the Press just to make noises. But we will give constructive views and expert opinions – with the aim of addressing the various current issues at local, State and national levels," he says.

Already, IEM has been offering its views and recommendations to address national issues pertaining to environmental protection, natural disasters, engineering infrastructure and more.

At the same time, Dato' Ir. Lim believes it is time for IEM to have a more powerful and effective presence in assisting the government with the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP). Being in the government service himself, he looks forward to seeing IEM members play a pivotal role in the ETP.

"Under the 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs), there are more than 70% entry-point projects which are related to engineering. This is where I think members of IEM, or engineers at large, should explore further opportunities to get involved – either directly or indirectly – in these projects," Dato' Ir. Lim says.

No man is an island and the President of IEM cannot achieve all this without giving due attention to what he calls the "three key enablers".

These are a good and committed governing body, a strong and supportive administrative staff (the secretariat) and a sound financial and asset management system.

"The governing body provides the direction and runs after the affairs of the Institution. The IEM council, Executive Committee, Standing Committees, Branches and all Technical Divisions and Special Interest Groups play a very important role to enable things to run smoothly in IEM. And to do so, the governing body must be united and stay focused," Dato' Ir. Lim explains.

He says the IEM secretariat is the backbone of the Institution. "The Institution cannot function effectively and efficiently without it. I will endeavour to create a conducive environment for the administrative staff," he says.

Lastly, a sound financial and asset management system is a necessity – without which the Institution would not be able to function at optimum level.

"While we continue to approve beneficial projects or programmes, we must also remain prudent so that all major expenditures are cost-effective," Dato' Ir. Lim says.

The new President is confident that IEM will continue to grow in strength and wisdom. With such a perspective, it looks like IEM is set for an exciting journey ahead! ■

*Dato' Ir. Lim Chow Hock is currently Director of the Division of River Basin and Coastal Zone Management with the Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia. He received the title Dato' in 2008.*