

12 MAY 1996

Lim-Ministry

MINISTRY TO FOCUS ON VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS, SAYS DR LIM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 12 (Bernama) -- The Primary Industries Ministry proposes to change its focus from primary commodities to downstream resource-based industries.

Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yik said today the changes would be in line with the direction of the national development, that is to turn Malaysia from a commodity-based to an industrialised country.

"The ministry was created in 1972 with the national focus to make Malaysia a competitive commodity producer in the international market," he told reporters after chairing the monthly Gerakan Central Political Committee Meeting here.

"However, over the past six years, we have slowly but surely been able to project value added (products) to the commodity sector," he said.

"Take rubber, for example, although we have dropped to being the third biggest producer of natural rubber we are now the fifth biggest consumer of rubber in the world," he added.

"We are using raw rubber, consuming it and value adding it to produce rubber-based products and goods," Dr Lim said.

The same applied to palm oil, timber and cocoa, he said, adding that he brought up the proposal with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Thursday. -- BERNAMA

YBK JK