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Mahathir-Consumers

SEE THE CLOSE CONSUMER-SUPPLIER LINK

KUALA LUMPUR, June 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the consumer movement's struggle will be more meaningful and productive if everyone understands the close link between consumers and suppliers.

The Prime Minister said everyone must realise that consumers and supplies shared the same responsibilities as they were the same people.

"A supplier of a particular service or product is also the consumer of several other services and goods," he said when launching the World Consumer Day celebrations and Happy Family competition at Dewan Mukhtamar, Pusat Islam here.

"As a consumer, he will not like his rights to be violated as when supplied with goods which don't meet standards or sold at the unstipulated price and so as a supplier he cannot expect consumers of his services or goods to be satisfied when they don't meet standards," he said.

Many consider themselves only as consumers without in the least realising that they were also suppliers, he said.

"Probably we feel that we don't produce anything for sale to anyone. Maybe not in the direct sense. But indirectly, with no lesser effect, we sell services or goods to employers who in turn pay us," he said.

For instance, Dr Mahathir said if a government office clerk was inactive and inefficient in processing an application or typing a letter, the delay could affect the supply of service to consumers.

The clerk was actually selling his service to the government and the government in turn was supplying service to the people, the Prime Minister said.

The delay would make the government inefficient and increase costs and eventually both consumers and suppliers would stand to lose because the consumer did not get his right while the supplier would incur high costs.

"If we always remember that we are suppliers and are also responsible to ourselves as consumers, then our rights as consumers will be protected at all times," he said.

"If today consumers feel that their rights are not being given due consideration, it's because we only see ourselves as consumers and forget our responsibilities as suppliers," he said.

On inflation, the Prime Minister said among the reasons was conspicuous consumption and not a rise in the price of goods or services accompanied by higher quality.

Eventhough the consumers might have lots of money, they should still spend wisely to avoid inflation.

"It's better for us to buy more goods or services which are reasonably priced than to buy something without considering the price just because we can buy at any price," he said.

Dr Mahathir said consumers were not being cheated if higher price was accompanied by better quality as it was impossible for them to improve quality without a higher price.

"However if the quality is the same or our productivity is the same, an increase in price or higher pay will mean inflation. We'll not enjoy a better life eventhough we spend or get more. This is what should be opposed by consumers." he said.

Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Datuk Abu Hassan Omar said the ministry proposed to set up a Consumer Institute to study, plan,

implement and evaluate activities associated with consumerism.

The institute would provide input to the formulation of policy to hand consumer issues in the country, he said. -- BERNAMA

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