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PALM OIL INDUSTRY HAS MANY NEW FRONTIERS TO TAP, SAYS HISHAMUDDIN

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 16 (Bernama) -- There are many new frontiers that remain to be fully tapped by the local palm oil industry as Malaysian palm oil and its products are a natural match for many developing nations in terms of cost competitiveness, nutrition, easy-to-digest qualities and the ability to lower the blood cholesterol level.

This was stated today by Deputy Minister of Primary Industries Datuk Hishamuddin Tun Hussein, who accompanied Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan recently.

Speaking at the opening of the 17th Palm Oil Familiarisation Programme here, he said the local palm oil industry must learn more about the specific requirements and needs of foreign customers.

He said it must be responsive to those needs and remain dynamic, successful and profitable.

He told reporters later that such a familiarisation programme is also important for the local palm oil industry as by educating prospective buyers it can indirectly overcome the negative campaigns and tariff barriers on Malaysian palm oil.

As a follow-up to Dr Mahathir's visit to Mongolia, he pointed out, a Mongol is participating in the familiarisation programme.

He added the follow-up is also a recognition of the government's effort to enhance the relationship among south-south countries and developing nations.

He said he had personally seen interest among the Mongols and the Kyrgyzs in Malaysian products.

Apart from educating the prospective buyers on palm oil and its product, he said it is also crucial for Malaysians to learn about the conditions of country they want to market their products in.

For example, he said, in Mongolia the temperature in certain months will be very cold and sometimes the liquid oil might freeze and this is one of the challenges that Malaysian exporters have to overcome.

In addition, he said, despite a small population of 2.5 million, Mongolia could be a strategic base for Malaysian products to penetrate the nearby markets, like China and Russia.

On efforts by the industry to promote palm oil and its products in Mongolia, Hishamuddin said the Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia (PORIM) has planned to hold a palm oil familiarisation programme in Mongolia next year.

On his visit to Kyrgyzstan, he said the Kyrgyzstan Government has asked Malaysia to help them formulate an economic blueprint for the country, including identifying potential industrial clusters to be developed.

Dr Byambaa Khuukhenkhuu, executive director of the Food Research & Production "HUNSTECH" Corporation of Mongolia, said his participation in the familiarisation programme was a follow-up to the recent signing in Mongolia of a memorandum of understanding on palm oil application between HUNSTECH and the Malaysian Ministry of Primary Industries.

He added the Mongols have started using Malaysian golden oil (palm oil) imported from Singapore as it is cheaper and suitable for bakery products.

Mongolia, he said, is interested in importing crude palm oil directly from Malaysia and refine it itself. -- BERNAMA

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