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MASA wants to give its input on proposed feeder firm

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THE MALAYSIAN Shipowners Association (MASA) is working towards having a dialogue with the Ministry of Transport to give its input on the proposed national feeder company.

MASA chairman Mirzan Mahathir said the association, in principle, supports the setting up of such a company but due consideration must be given to MASA members who are already involved in this business.

In order to enhance Port Klang's position as the hub centre of the nation and a transshipment point, the views of local shipowners should be taken into account, Mirzan told reporters yesterday in Kuala Lumpur, after the launch of the "Ship Monitor", a MASA publication.

On the participation of local ports in the national feeder company, Mirzan said although he welcomes their involvement, "ports are only interested in making sure cargo comes to them".

"You have to weigh the interest of the company and the shareholders as no one would want to set up a company that is not a viable entity," he said.

He said apart from MASA, the ministry should also get feedback from the Federation of Forwarding Agents, Container Hauliers Association of Malaysia, International Shipowners Association of Malaysia, the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers and the National Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia, among others.

Asked if MASA would express local shipowners' interest in gaining an equity in the national feeder company, Mirzan said, "At this point in time, it's not clear. We have to look at all issues and the equity structure of the proposed entity will be one of them."

Earlier MASA's vice-chairman Dr Nik Mohd Zain, who is also the executive chairman of Nepline Bhd said that any feeder company must have the backing from mainliners and the support of local shipowners.

He added that the composition of the equity should be further discussed and "if the bottom line is good, Nepline would like to go in", adding that currently Nepline operates a feeder service to Cambodia.

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