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MTUC SUPPORTS PM'S CALL TO FREIGHT FORWARDING FIRMS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 11 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) fully supports Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to freight forwarding firms to use local ports for export and import of goods as such a move will help increase business activities in Malaysian ports.

Its president, Zainal Rampak said today the country had been able to achieve an external trade surplus of RM16.3 billion for the first half this year due to increased exports and significant reduction in imports, as part of the government's austerity drive.

The country would be able to better manage the economic downturn if there could be further reductions in the outflow of foreign exchange by freight forwarders using local ports to ship out or ship in their goods, he said in a statement issued here.

"Malaysia has a number of well established ports -- Port Klang, Pasir Gudang, Kuantan, Pulau Pinang and Bintulu -- and we see no valid reason as to why freight forwarding firms are avoiding or simply refusing to use our very own port facilities," he said.

He also said an increase in domestic port usage would create more job opportunities for local workers, thus enabling them to earn better wages.

"The spin-off effects of these related activities will generate the growth of more supplementary industries and related downstream services," he said.

Zainal said it would contribute towards reviving economic activities and create more jobs by encouraging greater production, purchase and consumption of goods and services.

-- BERNAMA

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