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Proposal on guidelines for film-makers

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Information Ministry, the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry and other relevant authorities will discuss guidelines to curb distorted information and use of wrong images on Malaysia by film-makers.

Information Minister Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob said it was unfair for movie-makers, for example, to superimpose pictures that could give viewers the wrong impression of Malaysia.

He said this when asked to comment on the recently released Hollywood movie, Entrapment, starring James Bond legend Sean Connery and Catherine Zeta-Jones which portrays an inaccurate picture of social and cultural conditions in Malaysia.

Some of the scenes in the movie, produced by 20th Century Fox, apparently highlighted the dirty and unsightly side of the country against a backdrop of the Petronas Twin Towers, the world's tallest building.

The cast and crew of Entrapment were here last September for location shooting in Malacca and the Kuala Lumpur City Centre's Petronas Twin Towers.

Mohd Khalil said it was good for popular film-makers to make movies in Malaysia because it would help publicise the country.

"But they cannot be showing photographs which are full of lies. The whole world will come to believe that the scenery they saw in the movie Entrapment, for example, is real and that there are slums around it (Towers), with pollution and poverty.

"They should be more responsible in their products. The pictures of the country should be something real," he said after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Radio Televisyen Malaysia and Le Proton Lima Sdn Bhd.

With the MoU, RTM will be the official TV station for the Lima 99 Exhibition and Conference to be held between Nov 30 and Dec 5.

Mohd Khalil said Entrapment would make movie audiences in rich countries conclude that Malaysia was one of those developing countries which wasted public money on meaningless grandiose monuments.

On whether the proposed guidelines would mean that his ministry was controlling the media and film-makers, he said the ministry only wanted the industry players to portray Malaysia accurately.

Asked whether he would send a protest letter to the film-maker involved, he said he would wait for feedback from the other ministries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that there was a need for some monitoring or policing of Press freedom and advertising.

For instance, without naming the movie, Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were horrified to discover that the Kuala Lumpur Twin Towers, the tallest in the world, were pictured as rising from the slums in Malacca, 150km away.

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