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RAFIDAH-ELECTRONIC

RAFIDAH: GO FOR VIRTUAL MARKETING AND MANUFACTURING

BATU GAJAH, May 8 (Bernama) -- Manufacturers should incorporate virtual marketing and virtual manufacturing to enhance export market and facilitate their production process, Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Rafidah said here today.

She said in line with this, a task force on electronic economy (e-economy) has been set up under the ministry chaired by her, to look into the usage of virtual marketing and manufacturing by local industries.

Rafidah said that the government has identified three areas -- manufacturing, agriculture, and services -- where virtual marketing should be focused on.

The move is necessary so that local companies could compete with international companies which had already moved towards global networking in both virtual marketing and manufacturing, she said.

"Thus, we have to be part and parcel of it," Rafidah told reporters after launching the Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort Lady Membership programme.

Chief executive officer of Kumpulan Guthrie Bhd Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim will head the task force on agriculture with emphasis on marketing palm oil.

The task force will include Bank Negara Malaysia, Mimos, Economic Planning Unit (EPU), Malaysian Trade Development Corporation (Matrade), Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC), Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC), Small and Medium Industry Development Corporation (SMIDEC) and the private sector.

Rafidah said that they would meet regularly to up-date the government's developments in inculcating e-economy.

She also said that amidst this latest development, agencies under MITI need to undertake stock taking and implement new strategies in order to practise e-economy.

"We can no longer practise old strategies eventhough they were effective, as in years to come, the international market competition would be stiff. As such there is a need for new and innovative approaches so as to prepare ourselves for the market's challenges," she said.

She said for example small and medium scale industries (SMIs) would find the virtual marketing and manufacturing very useful for their export and marketing strategies.

Rafidah also stressed that marketing via e-commerce has become increasingly important and that "we should not ignore this fact."

Matrade, MITI and the private sector must establish a combined plan which could aggressively encourage Malaysia's manufacturers and traders to participate in e-commerce, she added.

"Those days there were no e-commerce, we have to do it now to market our products and to fulfill our procurement needs," Rafidah said, adding that there were more and more opportunities available via e-commerce.

On a directive by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad concerning the speedy use of allocations to each ministry under this year's budget, she said most of MITI's budget was for operational expenditure and very little was for development.

"We are among the better performing ministries," she said. -- BERNAMA

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