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Muhyiddin-Retail

MINISTRY ACTS TO HAVE MORE BUMIS IN URBAN RETAIL BUSINESS

IPOH, July 13 (Bernama) -- The Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs is taking measures to ensure increased Bumiputera participation in the retail business particularly in urban areas, Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

The ministry's Bumiputera participation unit would be revamped to create a special division which would take on a bigger role from its present responsibility which was confined to monitoring such participation in the running of petrol stations.

"The division will concentrate on enhancing Bumiputera participation in the retail and distribution trade," he told reporters after attending a dialogue with Bumiputera traders and wholesalers here.

He said the ministry had taken the measures following the recent call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Bumiputera involvement in the retail business particularly in new townships be increased.

Muhyiddin said his ministry would discuss Bumiputera retail business with manufacturing companies in the country.

This was to ensure that their products were channelled to Bumiputera retailers for distribution.

The division would also have a central database on existing Bumiputera retailers, their present status and the problems they faced.

Information on new Bumiputera businessmen wishing to join the retail trade would also be channelled to the database, Muhyiddin said.

This would enable the ministry to identify Bumiputera retailers who could be matched with certain manufacturing companies.

Malaysia's retail trade had very big potential with Malaysia's Retailers Association sales turnover for last year when the country had still not fully recovered from its economic setbacks was RM40 billion.

"We do not know how much of this RM40 billion retail trade was managed by Bumiputeras.. probably only a small portion," he said.

Roughly less than 15 per cent of Bumiputera businessmen were involved in the retail trade, Muhyiddin said.

Muhyiddin said after the New Economic Policy (NEP) ended in 1990, Bumiputera participation in the retail trade declined when the country's commerce and distribution sector was in fact expanding.

"The Government is viewing this problem seriously and we have to study how this problem can be handled."

He said that during the period of the NEP, various methods were employed to develop Bumiputera retail trade at state and central levels but after the NEP ended, no one was giving any attention to this matter.

"We have to look back and see how things can be improved in the Bumiputera retail business after having being left behind for 10 years," he said.

His ministry would work closely with the Entrepreneur Development Ministry and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry to expand Bumiputera retail business.

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