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SMIs to make full use of new measures

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Small and medium-scale entrepreneurs should make full use of the opportunities provided to them under the RM7.3 billion package announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said there were many programmes which these entrepreneurs could benefit under the package.

"At present, there are many complaints that it is difficult for these entrepreneurs to obtain loans to run their businesses as there are various procedures that they have to comply with.

"But the procedure will be easier for them under the package and thus all these entrepreneurs should make best use of it," said Rafidah Aziz, who is also Wanita Umno head after chairing the movement's executive council meeting at the party headquarters today.

She said this when asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's announcement of four new strategies, containing 90 measures, aimed at generating economic activities by mobilising domestic sources of growth while reducing the country's dependence on the external sector.

Rafidah said the package contained several measures which could help to overcome the negative impacts caused by Severe Acute Respiratory System which has jeopardised the tourism sector.

"All quarters should view the package positively as it provides an increased disposable income apart from helping to overcome the various economic problems which we are facing."

Meanwhile, Wanita MIC head Senator Jaya Partiban said the movement was happy with the move to allow Syarikat Perumahan Negara to buy 4,400 units of completed but unsold apartments at 20 per cent discount and rent it out to single mothers at RM50 per month.

"This announcement is will benefit all single mothers. We have long been fighting for houses for single mothers and we are happy with this move.

"At present, many single mothers cannot afford to purchase houses due to the high price. This will no longer be the case as under the package, the houses rented will eventually be sold to them."

She said the movement during its annual general assembly on May 4 passed a resolution calling for the Government to set up a revolving fund to provide financial assistance to single mothers to buy houses.