

Explain conflicting FDI figures, Miti told
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The International Trade and Industry Ministry (Miti) must clarify the “confusion” in foreign direct investment (FDI) figures, said opposition MP Tony Pua, as there are glaring differences between the minister’s announcement and official figures on its website.

Minister Mustapa Mohamed had said in a statement last week that Malaysia’s FDI totalled RM29.3 billion in 2010, and in the first quarter of this year it topped RM11 billion.

“While the statistics provided confirmed that approved FDI totalled RM29 billion in 2010, the approved FDI for the first three months of this year showed only a figure of RM4.6 billion, a far cry from the RM11 billion boasted by the Miti minister,” said Pua (left).

Pua (DAP-Petaling Jaya Utara) said he stumbled upon the “confusion” after cross-checking the figures on Miti’s website.

According to Pua, the FDI approved was “only RM9 billion”, which is much lower than Mustapa’s estimates.

He demanded that the ministry explain the “glaring difference” and also provide the comparative numbers of the approved FDI and actual investments for which approvals were given.

azlan“The difference between the two sets of numbers is most glaring for the year 2009 where the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had reported a steep fall in Malaysia’s FDI of only US\$1.38 billion (RM4.3 billion), only a fraction of the figure provided by Miti which showed US\$6.48 billion (RM20 billion) in approved investments.

“The minister had then admitted that the UNCTAD figure was accurate because it measured actual investments, as opposed to approved investments,” added Pua.

Asked if the conflict in the numbers was tantamount to being misleading, Pua said that it is far-fetched to make such an accusation but “an explanation is most certainly needed”.

He urged the government to be transparent in FDI performance as “any attempts to skew investment figures or provide a less than accurate picture” will only result in poor policies and a dip in economic attractiveness.