

Gov't won't rush to sign TPPA, assures minister

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The government would not rush into signing the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) unless it is convinced of its benefits, International Trade and Industry Minister Mustapa Mohamed said today.

"I would like to reiterate that Malaysia will not rush into signing the TPPA until we are convinced that on balance, the benefits outweigh the costs," he said in a statement today.

Mustapa (right) was responding to Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim's statement yesterday raising several concerns about the TPPA negotiations and even stating that PKR could reject the TPPA outright if a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis is not done.

"Issues such as state-owned enterprises (SOE), small and medium enterprises (SME), and affordable healthcare are among the concerns prioritised by our negotiators," Mustapa said.

Mustapa also said that the government had taken a "serious note" of the public's concerns about the transparency and secrecy of the negotiations.

Anwar had yesterday criticised the secrecy surrounding the negotiations, claiming that much of the information the opposition had was obtained from leaked information from other negotiating countries.

"The government welcomes the setting up of the bi-partisan parliamentary caucus on TPPA. The caucus was in Kota Kinabalu during the 18th round of negotiations and its presence is welcome for the 19th round of negotiations," Mustapa said.

The next round of negotiations is scheduled to take place between Aug 22 to 30 in Brunei.

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