

GST - Malays will pay more, Heng tells Chinese

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By Yap Jia Hee

MCA Wanita chief Heng Seai Kie has told Chinese in the country not to oppose the Goods and Services Tax (GST) as the system will see the Malays paying more.

She said two demographic patterns of the Chinese community, namely being of high income and having few children, should be enough reason for them not to oppose GST.

Heng pointed out under the old tax system, the Chinese community made up 90 percent of taxpayers due to their high income status but under the GST which is based on consumption, the Chinese community - which has a low birthrate - will benefit.

"Now the system has changed to GST, regardless of who you are or how much you earn [...] as long as you consume, you pay GST, isn't it?"

"Furthermore, we (Chinese) have the least children. Who has the most children? Our Malay friends have more children.

"When there are more children, there will be more consumption. When there are less children, then there will be less consumption, isn't it?" she was recorded as saying in Chinese while on the campaign trail in the current run-up to the Rompin by-election on Wednesday.

The recording emerged online after Heng (left in pix above with minister Nancy Shukri) accused vernacular China Press of quoting her out of context. The Chinese daily was forced to withdraw its Thursday report on the matter.

In the recording, Heng urged the Chinese community to look at the bigger picture and expressed puzzlement over why they would want to oppose the GST.

"In Malaysia, anyone can oppose GST but the Chinese do not have any reason to oppose GST because of these two patterns.

"You have fewer children, your consumption will be less so this GST system is beneficial to us (Chinese).

"They (Malays) have more children, so they have to pay more, right? So Chinese shouldn't oppose for the sake of opposing," she said.

'Listen to the whole thing'

When contacted for clarification, Heng said her comments should be taken in context of the whole 21-minute interview she gave to the China Press.

"If you listen to it as a whole, you will know that when the beginning and end of the interview are put together, the meaning is not as such (as reported by China Press).

"What was my original meaning? I think you should listen to it, then you will know why and what I said," Heng told Malaysiakini.

In the impromptu China Press interview, Heng had spoken at length about GST. The controversial bits came at the end and lasted for around two minutes.

Heng said it was "more than enough" that China Press had already retracted its report and if the public or opposition supporters were unconvinced, then it was up to them.

DAP's Seputeh MP Teresa Kok had in a statement today criticised Heng for trying to racialise the GST.

"It is clear that Heng was playing the race card in trying to justify the GST implementation.

"This not only shows her irresponsibility but also proves that BN government is under heavy pressure due to its inability justify GST implementation to the people," said Kok.

She urged the government to scrap GST if it could not properly defend the policy which has seen fierce criticism.

"On April 12, DAP political education director Liew Chin Tong in a statement has said that Deputy Finance Minister Ahmad Maslan, had been saying in numerous ceramah that GST was good for Malays because Chinese traders would now be forced to pay taxes which they had evaded before and at the same time MCA leaders told the Chinese community that the Malays, who had not been paying income taxes, would now be taxed," said Kok.

"I want to ask Heng if she agrees with Ahmad Mazlan's racial approach to explain to the Malays and if she dares to use her own racial explanation to Chinese to a Malay ceramah crowd?"

Yesterday, almost 20,000 people took to the streets (pix above) of Kuala Lumpur calling for the policy to be cancelled.