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Najib launches campaign to boost SME exports

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak yesterday launched a brand awareness campaign, "Beyond Nations", which aims to encourage and promote more small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to export their products and services.

Najib launched the campaign after chairing the third National Export Council meeting at Perdana Putra yesterday.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said the campaign is in line with the government's continuous initiatives to increase the SMEs' contributions to exports from 17.6% now to 23% by 2020.

He said the campaign's main pillars are to communicate, educate and nurture SMEs at all levels, especially first-time exporters.

"We want SME entrepreneurs to not only market their products locally but dare enough to venture abroad.

"Educating the SMEs is our



Najib (centre) at the launch of the campaign in Putrajaya. Also present were Mustapa (left) dan Dzulkipli (right). The campaign's main pillars are to communicate, educate and nurture SMEs at all levels, especially first-time exporters

biggest challenge to make them understand the export business," he told a media briefing after the launch of the campaign.

Malaysia External Trade Development Corp's (Matrade)

CEO Datuk Dzulkipli Mahmud said the agency aims to make SMEs think of the markets outside the country.

The majority of the SMEs, despite making up about 97% of business establishments in

Malaysia, only cater to the local market, Dzulkipli said.

He said currently, there are over 700,000 SMEs in Malaysia.

"We want SMEs to go beyond borders, beyond their local mindset and to break out

of their comfort zone into a vast overseas market," he said.

Dzulkipli said Malaysia currently ranked as the 23rd-largest world exporting country.

"The country, which exports to over 200 countries, aims to be among the world's top 20 largest exporting countries with the launch of the campaign," he said.

In a statement released in conjunction with the launch of the campaign, Matrade said SMEs' share of total exports was small at between 10% and 29.9% in Asean.

According to the SME Annual Report 2014/2015, the Malaysian SMEs' concentration are in the services sector with 90% (580,985) establishments, while 6% (37,861) are in the manufacturing sector followed by 3% in the construction sector (19,283).

The remaining 1% (6,708) are in the agriculture sector and 0.1% in the mining and quarrying sector. The SMEs' share of the total employment rate is 65%. — *Bernama*