

Malaysia must stick by principles in TPPA negotiations, says MTEM
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BY LEE SHI-IAN

Malaysia must stick by its principles if it intends to be party to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), said Malay Economic Action Council (MTEM) chief executive officer Mohd Nizam Mahshar.

"The government mustn't allow itself to be bullied into accepting terms which aren't favourable to Malaysia and its citizens," Mohd Nizam said during a TPPA roundtable meeting today.

Mohd Nizam said provisions which prevented the government from obtaining medicines at affordable prices or discouraged the growth and use of generic medicines, as unfavourable to the country.

"Tobacco control measures must definitely be excluded from the TPPA discussions, as health is an issue which affects all levels of society."

MTEM is among a number of Malay business groups who are concerned that Malaysia's entry into the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) will affect small-scale businesses and traders.

Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad delivered the keynote address for the two-day roundtable discussion held at Intan Mont Kiara this morning.

MTEM and other groups have sought Dr Mahathir's support in the hope that his influence would be sufficient to block Malaysia's entry into the TPP.

Mohd Nizam said the TPPA contained more drawbacks than benefits to Malaysia and expressed hope that Putrajaya would re-consider the public's sentiments before making a decision on the TPPA.

"Investor-to-state-dispute-settlements (ISDS) is a chapter which leaves the Malaysian government vulnerable to claims and lawsuits from foreign investors of TPP member countries," he said.

"Furthermore, on the subject of government procurement, there must be a provision which allows Malaysia the freedom to maintain policies allowing preferences for locals," he added.

Malaysia's participation in the ongoing TPPA negotiations has drawn a lot of criticism from politicians on both sides of the divide.

Shrouded in secrecy, even Dr Mahathir has felt compelled to complain about the lack of transparency in the ongoing TPPA discussions. - August 26, 2013.

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