

## **Time to look at GST, says tax expert**

**FreeMalaysiaToday**

**June 18, 2013**

**By Anisah Shukry**

KUALA LUMPUR: The goods and services taxes has been “misunderstood” by the public, a tax expert said today, stressing that there was a need to relook the controversial system now that polls were over.

“All countries in Asia have implemented the GST except Myanmar and Malaysia. This is not a good comparison for us to make,” said Jennifer Chang, senior executive of PricewaterhouseCoopers Tax Services at the Perdana Leadership Foundation CEO Forum 2013.

Chang said the GST was the only way in which the government could ensure all its citizens paid taxes evenly.

“Only one million out of 29 million Malaysians pay taxes now. All those people driving the big, beautiful cars – some of them are probably evading taxes, and the GST is the most efficient way of collecting the taxes from them.”

But she said the government had failed to “market” the GST effectively enough to the people, and this was why it had dragged its feet in the implementation.

“The problem of not implementing it faster was because of the general election. In Australia, after the government implemented the GST, they lost the election,” she said, to laughs from the audience.

But now that the polls were over, the time was ripe to talk about the GST seriously, she said.

“GST has been misunderstood by the public, and we need to properly market these taxes so that the public understand what it is all about,” said Chang.

She rubbished the misconception that the price of goods would increase dramatically in the wake of the GST, saying that common goods such as milk would be exempted from the tax.

“This tax exemption will ensure it doesn’t hurt the common person so much,” she said.

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Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2013/06/18/time-to-look-at-gst-says-tax-expert/>