

'Bumi firms not ready for TPPA'

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KUALA LUMPUR: International Trade and Industry Minister Mustapha Mohamed said the government would not scrap its pro-Bumiputera policies for the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) because Bumiputera firms are not ready to compete on the global stage.

“Bumiputera firms and government-linked companies are not ready to compete, hence we will still defend our (pro-Bumiputera) policies in the negotiations,” he told the Parliament.

At a press conference later, he said Malaysia has turned down some member countries' request for it to open up its government procurement sector, largely reserved for the Bumiputera firms.

“The Bumiputera policies have been in place for a long time and are successful. We stand firm on this,” he said.

He said there are also requests for access to Malaysia's land ownership and environment activities, which the government has also declined in view that these matters fall under the jurisdiction of state governments.

Meanwhile, Mustapa said the government is not being pressured to sign the TPPA before United States president Barack Obama's scheduled visit to Malaysia next month.

“(The visit) is not giving us any pressure, we have our stance on policies and a constitution to follow.

“No foreign country can dictate what we do,” he said.

The Jeli MP said there is no deadline set for member countries to conclude the talks as long as the disputes remained unresolved.

He said the government was against the setting-up of an investor-state dispute settlement mechanism as proposed under the TPPA.

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