

Amanah hopes Mustapa will keep to his word on TPPA
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Amanah communication director Khalid Abd Samad says among the concerns in the TPP agreement is that it seeks to ensure free competition without government intervention and control. — TRP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR, Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah) welcomed the assurances made by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed on the government's stance before signing the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).

Amanah communication director Khalid Abd Samad said despite agreeing to the TPPA, the government has said it will not sign the agreement before it is brought up in Parliament.

"The minister had also promised that details of the TPPA will be revealed to the public for discussion and debate," he said in a statement today.

Khalid said Amanah hoped that the minister would keep his promise and give adequate time, not only for Parliament, but for the general public to understand the contents of the agreement and also to discuss on it.

"We also hope all comments will be taken seriously, with the appropriate action initiated and it is not just a public relations exercise."

Khalid added that the minister, on his own, had also acknowledge that there were several issues and concerns regarding the TPPA.

According to him, among the concerns in the agreement is that it seeks to ensure free competition without government intervention and control.

"This will cause the much stronger and capable companies to dominate the market."

The Shah Alam MP said local companies are far smaller than the United States (US) multinational companies and so others will be affected and consequently marginalised in this aspect.

"For a local company, even entering the market in a partner country like the US, Canada and Australia may post a risk if it is recognised that local companies are not able to compete even in their own national markets.

"If that is true, then surely they would not be able to compete in the respective country as a partner!"

On the question of intellectual property rights, Khalid said it would definitely have an impact on the price of drugs in particular, and enforcement of intellectual property rights would result in skyrocketing costs of drugs.

“Although this may be good for the pharmaceutical companies, it will undoubtedly have a negative impact on the public.”

Khalid said Amanah would not oppose something that would benefit the country and the people, but feared that the TPPA might only bring short-term benefits while adding the country’s dependence on limited sources of revenue.

He added that all efforts to develop the ability of private and public sector in other areas in order to explore new sources of revenue would be trimmed from the beginning through this agreement.

In view of that, he said the effects of a short-term and long-term agreement like this should be studied carefully.

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