

Provision On Anti-Corruption In TPPA In Line With Government's Objective To Eliminate Corruption

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 15 (Bernama) -- Implementation of the provision in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) on anti-corruption is in line with what is desired by the government, and in fact, will help to address the issue more effectively.

Dean of the College of Law, Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Associate Professor Dr Ahmad Martadha Mohamed, citing transparency and compliance with the laws, as examples, said any action to be taken against individuals involved in corruption was in tandem with the government's objective to eradicate corruption.

"Elements on transparency and compliance with the laws are not new. They are international standards with transparency becoming part of good governance in the government," he told Bernama.

He said corruption could be more effectively addressed if all 12 member countries emphasised compliance towards eradicating the problem.

Besides Malaysia, other countries involved in TPPA are Brunei, Singapore, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Peru, United States of America and Vietnam. "Prior to this, we don't have external agencies, like asking the government to emphasise more on eliminating corruption, making us feel that what we have done is good enough.

"However, when 12 countries, including Malaysia, emphasise compliance to that, then it has to be done more effectively," he added.

For former Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) deputy chief commissioner Datuk Sutinah Sutan, she opined that existing regulations and laws on corruption were sufficient and there was no need for a provision on anti-corruption in TPPA.

This is because Malaysia has signed the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and as such, there are various policy regulations and laws on corruption under the convention, she added.

In the private sector, she said MACC, with the cooperation of agencies such as the Malaysian Institute of Integrity, Transparency International Malaysia and the Malaysian Companies Commission, conducted integrity programmes to further enhance the corporate integrity system in Malaysia.

"In terms of procurement, we, in Malaysia, have long practiced the integrity pact where the government and companies which are awarded tenders are required to sign the corporate integrity pledge," she added.

Apart from that, she said the laws in Malaysia could be made stricter to fight corruption and cited the Corporate Liability Act, currently being drafted to address corrupt practices among private companies.

Sutinah also said MACC and the relevant agencies would continue to make improvements in efforts to eliminate corruption.

"MACC too should be quick in making changes to adapt with changing times, like in terms of strategy, approach and also to improve on procedures, regulations and laws," she added.

Meanwhile, Transparency International-Malaysia (TI-M) president Datuk Akhbar Satar said elements on anti-corruption, transparency and integrity had to be included in the TPPA provisions to ensure action would be taken against anyone involved.

However, he expressed the need for it to be implemented effectively and efficiently.

President of the Malaysian Crime Prevention Awareness Board, Prof Datuk Seri Saharuddin Awang Yahya believed that by having the provision on anti-corruption in TPPA, it would facilitate member countries to address the problem through sharing of information.

"All the countries have their anti-corruption agencies. I believe, they will be sharing of information among them to better address the problem," he added.

In the 30 chapters on TPPA, a chapter was allocated on Transparency and Anti-Corruption, which aims to promote the goal, shared by all TPP Parties, of strengthening good governance and addressing the corrosive effects bribery and corruption can have on their economies.

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