

Kok hopes Dr M will secure more palm oil sales from China

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PUTRAJAYA, April 13 (Bernama) -- Primary Industries Minister Teresa Kok Suh Sim hopes Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would raise the topic of palm oil exports to China when he attends the One Belt, One Road summit in Beijing later this month.

Commenting on concerns that the sale of the commodity was not discussed during the recent East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project negotiations, she expressed hope that China would give a stronger commitment to buy Malaysian palm oil following the announcement of the project's revival.

"I did not participate in the ECRL talks so I could only convey my wish. As the prime minister is going to China at the end of this month for the One Belt, One Road summit, I hope there he will be able to secure more sales for our palm oil," she told reporters after the opening of the Nutrition Seminar: Living Healthy with Malaysian Palm Oil here today.

Tun Daim Zainuddin, the prime minister's special envoy for the ECRL talks with China, announced yesterday that the ECRL project would continue but at a lower cost of RM44 billion compared with the original cost of RM65.5 billion.

However, he said the renegotiation was strictly about the rail link and did not touch on other matters such as palm oil purchase.

Kok also expressed hope to see more local content being used in the construction of the ECRL.

"When they build the elevated railway, they will definitely need seismic bearings that deal with earthquakes or any kind of shaking or earth movement. In Malaysia, we have that

product.

"We also hope they can use Malaysian wood and more local contractors can be hired for this project," she said.

Meanwhile, Kok called on medical professionals to partner with the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) in conducting research to defend palm oil from the wrong perception regarding its health risks.

Medical professionals, she said, could become Malaysian ambassadors to spread positive and correct information to the public, as the negative perception of palm oil was mainly due to ignorance of its goodness and health benefits.

"What doctors say are very important. If doctors say something is good, everyone will believe; but the doctors themselves must be convinced about the research findings.

"This is why it would be good for them to work together with our scientists and the MPOB to conduct studies on patients or for medical courses," she added.

Kok noted that the MPOB was already conducting research jointly with local and international medical experts to prove palm oil's health benefits.

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