

GOOD RESPONSE

BOOST FOR FOOD BANK INITIATIVE

Opening of distribution centre in Kajang to ease collection, distribution of donations

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GOVERNMENT initiatives to prevent food waste and provide aid to those in need have been

expanded with the launch of its first distribution centre under the Food Bank Malaysia programme.

The centre, an initiative by the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Graduate School of Business, was a collaboration with Malaysia Food Bank Foundation and Legasi Z Sufi Sdn Bhd.

The food bank programme is being managed by the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry, with cooperation from strategic partners.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, who was at the soft launch of the centre in Bukit Angkat here, said when the ministry kicked off the programme in August 2018, it was looking at having its own distribution centre to achieve the initiative's aims.

"This is one of the government's projects that could have a wide-reaching impact at low cost.

"My officers have looked into the good practices of similar pro-

grammes, such as Second Harvest Japan, FoodForward South Africa and those implemented in Singapore, Indonesia and the United Kingdom.

"We did not have a distribution centre when the programme was introduced."

He said the centre, at 1,200 sq m, made collecting donations and planning the distribution of aid easier, adding that the centre had facilities to store perishable goods.

"Food items will be shipped out in batches, categorised by how long they've been in storage — zero to three months, three to six months or more than six months."

He said beneficiaries of the programme include People's Housing Project residents, public university students and flood victims.

"Since its inception, the programme has benefited about 48,000 people from targeted households and about 12,000 public university students."

He said the food programme also had 14 one-tonne chiller trucks, excluding those belonging to strategic partners, which include Mutiara Food Bank and

Food Aid Foundation.

"We plan to have 123 institutions comprising polytechnics, teachers' training institutes and private universities join the programme," he said, adding that up to last month, 430 hotels had joined the programme.

"We have supermarkets showing interest in the programme."

Saifuddin said another distribution centre for the northern zone was being developed in Bandar Baharu, Kedah.

"It is a strategic location at the Kedah-Penang-Perak border.

"We have identified the warehouse and renovation work is being carried out. It is expected to begin operation by February."

"We hope to have distribution centres in all zones — east coast, central, northern and southern."

He attributed the progress and expansion of the programme to the government's effort in promulgating the Good Samaritan Bill, which seeks to protect contributors to food banks.

The law aims to reduce the possible risks and liabilities faced by contributors.



Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail checking the food items at the Food Bank Malaysia distribution centre in Bukit Angkat, Kajang, yesterday. BERNAMA PIC