

Cabinet backs 'Buy M'sian Goods'

Govt ministers reject move to boycott non-Muslim products

PETALING JAYA: The Cabinet is backing the growing calls to support Buy Malaysian Goods while rejecting the narrow stand to boycott non-Muslim products.

"The Cabinet rejects the narrow mentality and racial-based stand and sentiment which certain quarters are trying to push. This can affect peace and well-being of this nation.

"Instead, the people are urged to support Buy Malaysian Goods initiatives as this will benefit the country," the executive branch of the government said in a statement yesterday.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail chaired the Cabinet meeting yesterday and the ministers agreed that attempts to boycott products by non-Muslims were unreasonable.

Service-based business groups have also come out to say that Malaysians should support local products and services instead of calling for a boycott of non-Muslim products.

Federation of Malaysian Indian-Muslim Associations (Permim) president Dhajudeen Shahul Hameed says Malaysia is a multiracial country, and people cannot boycott certain groups.

"We should promote made-in-Malaysia products. Any boycott will have its consequences. Let all of us think as Malaysians. We promote Malaysian products," he said.

Malaysia Singapore Coffeeshop Proprietors' General Association president Datuk Ho Su Mong said the call for boycott was not good for the unity of the country.

"We, in the service industry, have a coffee culture. We serve all races, irrespective of whether you are Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban or Kadazan," he said.

Ho noted that he has not seen restaurants or coffee shops being boycotted, adding that he hoped it would not happen.

Malaysian Indian Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Datuk Syed Jamarulkhan S. Kadir said boycott-

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Executive branch of govt

ing was not good as there were quality products made by Muslims and non-Muslims.

"If you want to support then it is up to you, nobody can stop you. That is individual right. But a campaign like this will not be good for the country," he said.

Syed Jamarulkhan said all the races in the country had contributed to the development of Malaysia and no race should be alienated.

"The strength of our country is our diversity. Each community has its own strength," he said.

Mydin supermarket chain owner Datuk Ameer Ali said more efforts should be concentrated on promoting products made by Malaysian manufacturers.

Malaysians, he said, must remember that multinationals are controlling the market and the profits are not being channelled back into the country.

He said there should be a mechanism to allow products by local manufacturers to be accessible and affordable to all Malaysians.

Recently, certain groups have been pushing for a campaign on social media to boycott goods produced by non-Muslims.

The campaign, which has been making its rounds on social media, has since been denounced by politicians and civil society leaders.

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had earlier criticised the campaign, along with Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk

Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail and Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong said the boycott was "an act of economic sabotage" and that it was against the interest of the country.

Opinion leaders from civil society also made a stand against the boycott, saying that it was impractical and hypocritical.

The group of 12 opinion leaders included Emeritus Prof Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi, Mohamed Tawfik Ismail, Anas Zubedy, Prof Dr Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi, Syed Sadiq Albar, Nurul Haqq Shahrir and Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai.

The others are Datuk Noor Farida Mohd Ariffin, Datuk Hussamuddin Yaacob, Dr Chandra Muzaffar, Datuk Seri Jahaberdeen Mohamed Yunoos and Tan Sri Johan Jaafar.

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said such a boycott could cost workers, including Muslims, their jobs.