

## 'Government cannot put control on prices of all goods'

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*Chong (front, second right) speaks to one of the exhibitors. — Photo by Chimon Upon*

**KUCHING:** The federal government cannot impose price control on all goods because this could create surpluses in the market and affect quality, says Deputy Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Chong Chieng Jen.

He says price control, which is government-mandated legal minimum or maximum price-levelling, is only for essential goods and it is usually implemented as a means of direct economic intervention to manage the affordability of certain goods.

"There are goods that the government regulates the price control (over) and there are goods the government doesn't.

"As far as our government is concerned, it only regulates price control on essential goods that are subsidised by the government. Because we subsidise the goods, then we can control the prices," he said at the launch of the Consumer Voice Association's Sarawak Expo 2020 here yesterday.

Chong said the federal government subsidised and controlled prices of many essential items to keep the prices low including cooking oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for cooking, petrol, flour, bread, rice, and sugar.

According to him, there are many other items that the government does not regulate the prices of, especially beverages, because should their prices be set, the quality would be compromised.

On the expo, Chong believed that it would expose consumers to the actual functions of various government departments.

“As consumers, they should know how to utilise it when encountering certain needs.

“For example, if the public face confusion on why some goods go up in price and some are not, just visit KPDNHEP (Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs) or the Customs Department for the clarification – instead of pointing fingers at the government,” he added.

