



Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister **Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin** (front row, centre) with recipients at Cooperatives Commission of Malaysia Excellent Service Awards in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Mohamad Shahril Badri Saali

Hamzah: TPP won't adversely affect SMEs

KUALA LUMPUR: Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin refutes allegations that the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement will affect small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including cooperatives.

"Claims often arise because there are groups with their own motives or agendas."

"Contrary to these claims, when we, as a small country, accept the free trade concept, the strong competition will force us to think more innovatively and produce more creative products," he said.

"The Cooperatives Commission of Malaysia (CCM) will act as an adviser and assist SMEs and cooperatives once the TPP is implemented."

"CCM will analyse business sectors to ensure that cooperatives can help promote the nation's economic growth."

Through this analysis, Hamzah said, he was confident that Malaysian SMEs and cooperatives could compete with businesses from

other TPP countries.

"Now, our SME products cannot compete with those in developed countries, like the United States, Canada and Australia, but if we focus and help cooperatives, these products can compete internationally," he said, adding that with the trade pact, there would be opportunities to market Malaysian products in other TPP countries.

Hamzah said when local products were of competitive quality, the government, through the ministry and CCM, would assist businesses that wished to enter the global market.

"There are also programmes within my ministry, the International Trade and Industry Ministry, and

the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) that help SMEs and cooperatives market their products locally and internationally," Hamzah said at the CCM Excellent Service Awards yesterday, where 106 employees were given recognition.

Out of 12,000 cooperatives, some 2,000 produce small- and medium-sized industry products.

Hamzah said 2,144 cooperatives gave dividends worth RM1.22 billion last year com-

pared with 1,590 cooperatives that paid out RM1.15 billion in 2013.

"This is something we can be proud of as it shows that these products are generating huge profits."

Contrary to these claims, when we, as a small country, accept the free trade concept, the strong competition will force us to think more innovatively and produce more creative products.

Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin

Domestic trade, cooperatives and consumerism minister