

Digitalisation to empower entrepreneurs

KUALA LUMPUR: In developing a dynamic entrepreneurial community, MARA is offering programmes that will offer optimum opportunities for entrepreneurs to expand their businesses, particularly in e-commerce.

Its chairman Datuk Azizah Mohd Dun said it was imperative for MARA to not only assist Bumiputeras to set up enterprises, but more importantly, sustain their businesses.

This, she said, was in line with one of the main thrusts of MARA's Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

"We aim to sustain some 50,000 existing Bumiputera entrepreneurs, with efforts already in place. As we all know, they have faced numerous challenges during the pandemic.

"Hence, we have developed programmes to allow them to make use of online apps to promote and sell their products, for instance," she said.

She said MARA also provided continuous learning opportunities for the businessmen through courses, grants, while also financially assisting them in expanding their business.

Azizah said MARA was targeting to produce 15,000 new entrepreneurs in the next five years.

Apart from its own funds, MARA had also received additional allocation from the government through the Strategic Programme to Empower the People and Economy (Pemerkesa), including RM50 million to assist 300 Bumiputera contractors who were struggling to secure projects during the pandemic.

In embracing digitalisation,

MARA has migrated to online services for among others, applications, loan repayments and entrepreneurial courses.

Mara deputy director-general (entrepreneurship) Datuk Zulfikri Osman said MARA was giving attention to entrepreneurs from five industries who faced difficulties in sustaining their business due to the pandemic, namely, automotive, food and beverage (F&B), lifestyle, services and construction.

"We are also aiming to churn out some 15,000 new entrepreneurs, including those from newly-explored sectors as we produce graduates in fields like Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data," he said.

He said MARA was constantly looking for opportunities and potential to work with e-commerce partners to revitalise the economy of Bumiputera entrepreneurs.

The latest collaboration was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with e-commerce platform Shopee Mobile Malaysia Sdn Bhd (Shopee).

This collaboration between MARA and Shopee targets a total of 5,000 SKUs of products to be marketed throughout 2020 with an increase in entrepreneurial income expected between 15 and 20 per cent.

In an effort to complete a conducive business ecosystem and expand the supply chain of medicines and pharmaceutical equipment to generate a more sustainable and competitive Bumiputera socio-economy, MARA has also recently entered into an MoU agreement with Pharmaniaga and Macro Tech Ventures Sdn Bhd.