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# Many exporters unaware of importance of FTA

**KOTA KINABALU:** Many exporters are still lacking in awareness in respect of the importance of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) deputy chief executive Officer, Mohd Kamarudin Hassan said yesterday.

He said that although they knew the benefits of the FTA for their businesses, exporters had the perception that utilising the measures under it, was a hassle.

"There are a set of procedures that exporters need to follow such as obtaining a Certificate of Origin (COO) for their goods. This is to ensure that importing countries recognise the COO and are confident of the quality of the goods coming from Malaysia.

"It does not take long to obtain the COO. As long as the documents of exporters are in order, the COO can be issued in a matter of days," he told reporters after opening Matrade's seminar on optimising opportunities under Malaysia's FTA here.

According to Mohd Kamarudin, about 20 percent of the country's total export revenue was from Malaysia's FTAs with participating countries.

He said even though the utilisation of FTA measures by Malaysian exporters was considered low, there was still hope that they would eventually realise its importance to ensure the competitiveness of their products on the global market. "Malaysia's economic growth relies a lot on external trade and our average export revenue annually is about RM600 billion. We thus need a higher utilisation of the FTA measures in coming months," he stated.

Mohd Kamarudin said it was important that Malaysian exporters became aware of the FTA before the Asean FTA (AFTA) was fully implemented next year.

He said Malaysia has bilateral agreements with Japan and Pakistan as well as under Asean with China, Japan, Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. -Bernama