

Press Clipping

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PORT authorities in this country have evolved to become more than just regulatory bodies by playing active roles in assisting port operating companies to create conducive business environment, said Port Klang Authority general manager Datin Paduka O. C. Phang.

She said Port Klang has been enhancing its post privatisation functions to support its two port terminal operators (Northport and Westports) and they have currently surpassed the accepted industry benchmark.

Phang said this when commenting on claims made by former Port Klang Authority general manager Datuk M. Rajasingam at a seminar in Kuala Lumpur recently that port regulatory functions in the country over the private port terminal operating companies have been inefficient leading to development of ambiguous port development strategies and poor utilisation of resources.

Phang said the question of inefficiency was baseless.

"We have our port development strategies and in the case of Port Klang, there is a long-term plan until 2010.

"To date, we are on track and constantly in communication with our port operators to see the success of the plan.

"For instance, Port Klang as a national load centre has embarked to promote more industries to be located around the port areas via Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ).

"As the cargo grows, we also provide enough land bank to cater volume increase and expansion.

"With Government's approval we have demolished squatter areas and also identified patches of land amidst for business purposes," she said, adding that "port operators are our priority, and we have been working closely with them in line with national agenda, policies and aspirations".

She said they have been a proactive trade facilitator, moderator, coordinator of development of ports, strategic port planner and training provider.

"Since privatisation, PKA has enhanced its role as a trade facilitator to ensure our port operations are efficient and effective.

Port Klang exceeds industry expectations

Malaysian port authorities playing bigger roles now



Phang: 'Port operators are our priority, and we have been working closely with them in line with national agenda, policies and aspirations.'

"At PKA for example, we have set up one-stop agency, free commercial zones, Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ), Port Consultative Committee (PCC), interfacing IT system and modality scheme of inter terminal transfer.

"The one-stop-agency is for port operators and port users to facilitate efficient delivery system, expedite and assist approval from various authorities."

"Currently, our one-stop-agency has also extended its role to work closely with businesses that are interested to be in our PKFZ which is another national project to assist trade facilitation for ports by creating more

critical mass of cargo," she said.

In order to be in constant communication with the port community, Phang explained that PCC that consisted of International Ship Owners Association of Malaysia (ISOAM), the Malaysian Shipowners Association (MASA), International Chamber of Commerce and other players in the industry have the objective to disseminate important port developments and also to obtain first hand feedback from the users.

"And, if need arises, we also holds dialogues with specific users for fast resolution of any complaints, grudges and malpractices.

"My door is always open for anybody to come and discuss things over," she said.

To maintain harmony, Phang said PKA also acts as a moderator between port operators and their users and all these are done to provide a favourable business environment.

"Gone were the days where we sit around for cargo to roll in," she said, adding that port operators were also carrying out aggressive marketing to generate cargo.

In terms of performance and responsibility of port regulators, Phang explained that the Government through annual reports supported by facts and figures would assess them.

Phang lauded that Port Klang operators had surpassed the accepted industry benchmark handling container between 35 and 39 moves per hour as opposed to the normal 25 to 27 moves per hour.

"Port regulators in this country are very much aware of what are the acceptable international standards that are required in

the port business.

On Rajasingam's claims on the inability of port regulators to monitor even basic port statistics which were causing considerable confusion in the country and misleading policy planners, she said port throughput records were transparent.

"We adhere to basic port statistics mechanism and we use ship-to-shore method, which counts goods from and onto the vessels.

"Thus, there is no question of double counting even for Less Container Load (LCL) that usually moves around the terminal area.

"For transshipment, it has to be counted twice due to two movements of "in" and "out" which are charged for each movement.

"We do not encourage re-stowing at Port Klang but data are taken as we have to monitor the situation because we do not want Port Klang to be the dumping ground of containers as it will promote delays," she said.

"But, for sure what happens in the container yard is not counted," Phang said, adding that all the inputs were given by Northport, Westports, Foreshore and Kapar Power Station.

In a nutshell, she said the port environment is volatile and ever changing, thus there was no "magic formula" that would stand against the test of time.

"We have to adapt and place ourselves at an advantage point to grab opportunities and defy challenges.

"We have to use our head, heart, gut and intuition to guide us," she said.