

5 February 2021

PRESS STATEMENT – RE-OPENING OF ALL BUSINESSES

The shopping mall and retail industries and all businesses in our malls were initially relieved with the initial announcement that all business will be allowed to open with stricter SOPs. However, the good news was short lived as the acute disappointment came as fast - with more restrictions on businesses that cannot be opened and only very few additional businesses are allowed to be opened instead.

We have long advocated that all business and economic activities are allowed to operate, so long as the social distancing criterion and required SOPs can be complied with. We strenuously believe that it is impossible to have a comprehensive positive list of all economic and sub-economic sectors to be allowed to open and invariably some sectors will inadvertently be omitted. We have consistently advocated that **ALL BUSINESSES CAN OPEN** except for a judiciously crafted **NEGATIVE** list of those obviously unable to comply with the SOPs eg contact sports.

There is now **DESPERATE URGENCY** to review the latest SOPs to allow all businesses to open especially for those in the **apparel, fashion accessories (including handbags and shoes) and garment industries** in view of the upcoming Chinese New Year where seasonal stocks designed for this festive season have a very short selling window and a rapidly expiring shelf life of less than one week to go; otherwise, these goods will have to be written off with huge losses to the already very fragile retail and garments industry of an estimated RM120 million per day. With a total of 500,000 jobs at stake, this will lead to unnecessary and even more casualties of business closures and even bankruptcies, with resulting layoffs and unemployment along the entire supply chain.

During the 2020 MCO, the main contention for this prohibition was the risk of trying out clothes but this has since been resolved with the undertaking that all clothes tried have to be steam cleaned and the changing rooms sanitised after each use and if necessary, more stringent SOPs on fitting rooms can be carried out. We have been left in confusion why this cannot be re-implemented.

We are in full support of the recent press statement by Industries Unite dated 4 February 2021 calling for engagement and consultation with industry players for a fully coordinated effort to chart our way towards business recovery in due course.

In this connection, our practitioners and stakeholders look forward to work closely with the authorities to craft out rules and SOPs to ensure that they are practical and unambiguous. It is essential that both the public and private sectors work together and plot our path towards economic recovery in the immediate and longer term.

What is urgently needed now is to allow the public to rebuild confidence to get on with their daily lives and continue to earn their livelihoods. We wish to state that the overwhelming majority of Malaysians appreciate the need for some inconvenience during this pandemic and have accepted and abided by the SOP requirements. At shopping malls and business outlets including F&B, safety for all staff, tenants, patrons, visitors and shoppers etc is of primary concern and we have put in great efforts for SOP compliance, social distancing as well as enhanced cleaning and sanitization measures.

However, safety is a joint responsibility and fighting Covid-19 needs close community effort amongst everyone to comply with the necessary SOPs in our new normal. We look forward to welcome back consumers to shop with confidence and peace of mind.

Thank you.

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This statement is jointly issued by the following:

- *Persatuan Pengurusan Kompleks Malaysia (PPK) – Malaysia Shopping Malls Association*
- *Bumiputra Retailers Organisation (BRO)*
- *Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA)*
- *Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA)*
- *Malaysian Garment Marketers Association (MGMA)*
- *Malaysian Textile Manufacturers Association (MTMA)*
- *Federation of Malaysian Fashion Textile & Apparel (FMFTA) including :*
 - *Malaysian Footwear Manufacturers' Association (MFMA)*
 - *Bonia Corporation Berhad*
 - *Malaysian Knitting Manufacturer's Association (MKMA)*
 - *Persatuan Batik Malaysia*
 - *Persatuan Wanita Bumiputra Dalam Perniagaan Profesion Malaysia (PENIAGAWATI)*
 - *Malaysia Garments Wholesale Merchants Association (MGWMA)*