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Action plan to protect kids unveiled

Initiative aims to keep children safe from cyber predators and other online threats

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PUTRAJAYA: An "urgently needed" action plan to protect children online has been unveiled.

The action plan – designed to ward off threats like cyber bullying, cyber grooming, identity theft, pornography and violent content – will be put into place beginning this year.

It will, among others, encourage Internet Service Providers and broadcasters to take part in measures to protect children and for existing laws and guidelines to be reviewed.

It will also see the compilation of court cases, police reports and complaints as a reference on the background of the children, perpetrators and users involved.

In the long term, the action plan seeks to restrict children's access to porn, subversive and other such websites, ensure that cybercafes follow the laws against children surfing for porn and adults searching for child porn websites, and for computer games to be classified.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim said a nationwide roadshow on the action plan would be carried out soon.

"Everybody needs to know what the action plan is all about because threats against children by cyber predators are real and serious.

"Parents, especially, need to pay attention to this initiative because they are the ones who provide their children with the gadgets.

"Ultimately, protecting their children is their responsibility," she said after opening the

two-day Regional Conference On Child Online Protection: Towards An Integrated Approach here yesterday.

The public has been eagerly waiting for the action plan as it marked the first step towards amending the outdated Child Act.

The lead ministries and agencies involved in the implementation of the action plan are the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry, Education Ministry, Home Ministry, Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission and the police.

Earlier this month, *The Star* reported that the Cabinet had given its approval on Feb 11 to the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry to proceed with the action plan which took about two years to prepare.

Ministry officials said with the unveiling

of the action plan, it had moved a step closer towards amending the Child Act, 70% of its provisions and clauses needed to be updated to deal with online threats.

The officials said while it was still too early to suggest when such amendments would be made, the action plan had given them the direction towards the initiative.

"There will be more in-depth studies and engagement with all relevant stakeholders," said the officials.

In an immediate reaction, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said he welcomed the action plan but would need to study it first.

"There's no doubt that we are with the ministry in strengthening our children's safety. However, the action plan has to work well with what we have in our existing system."

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ZULKIFU ERSAL/THESUN



Mustapa (right) chairing a dialogue session at the E&E industry Associations 2015 in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Ministry forecasts modest growth in E&E exports

BY WAN ILAIKA MOHD ZAKARIA
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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia expects growth in the export of electrical & electronics (E&E) products to almost halve this year to between 4% and 5%, compared with the 8.1% achieved in 2014, said Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

"We expect moderation this year, due to the global economic climate," he told reporters after chairing a dialogue session with the E&E industry associations yesterday.

He said the E&E sector has contributed approximately 33.4% of total exports last year, making it a key sector to the country's economic growth, particularly in trade and exports.

"Last year's total exports for E&E products was RM256.14 billion, an increase of 8.1% from RM236.98 billion in 2013," he added.

Moving forward, Mustapa said the government will establish a strategic council for the E&E sector, that functions as a platform for its members to propose strategic and action plans for the sector.

"The strategic council will also enable members to identify the gaps in the E&E

ecosystem and establish sub-working groups to address specific needs for the industry to move forward in the next five years," he said, adding that strategic council members will include both government and private sectors.

Meanwhile, Mustapa said the issues raised during the dialogue session were issues across the board, such as incentives, foreign workers, licensing, skills and talent development and energy and water related issues.

"Miti will work with counterparts from other ministries and agencies to address the issues raised," he added.

The dialogue session was attended by seven E&E industry associations, including Malaysia Cable Manufacturers Association, Japanese Chamber of Trade and Industry, Malaysia American Electronics Industry, Electrical and Electronics Association of Malaysia and Malaysian Integrated Chip Designer Association.

Representatives from the government included the **Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation**, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Human Resources, Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water, and Ministry of Natural Resources.

