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# Malaysia to maintain lead

**WORLD'S LARGEST**

**PRODUCER, EXPORTER**

**OF CONDOMS:** Local manufacturers can hit RM300m mark this year, says Minister

**OOI TEE CHING**

**M**ALAYSIA is set to maintain its lead as the world's largest producer and exporter of condoms as the current economic uncertainty in Europe and the US drives more people to be more vigilant about birth control.

Since 2009, Malaysia is the world's largest producer of condoms and continues to lead with exports.

"Malaysia supplies 20 per cent of the world's condom demand of 20 billion pieces a year. Condom exports are rising because in bad times as people tend to be more vigilant about birth control," said Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok.

"I think our manufacturers can hit the RM300 million mark this year," he said. Last year, Malaysia exported 4.37 billion pieces valued at around RM285 million.

On the outlook, Dompok expects condom sales to remain robust as this birth control option is also used in the prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS.

The minister was speaking to reporters after witnessing the han-

dover of one million pieces of the contraceptive from manufacturers to the National Population and Family Development Board under the Women and Family Development Ministry. Also present were National Population and Family Development Board chairperson Tan Sri Napsiah Omar and Malaysian Rubber Export Promotion Council chairman Datuk Billy Abit Joo.

This initiative is being held in conjunction with World Population Day 2012, under the auspices of the United Nations Population Fund's "Seven Billion Actions" campaign that seeks to generate public awareness on the socio-economic impacts of overpopulation.

To date, the world's population has surpassed seven billion people and in many parts of the world, people still go to bed hungry.

Condom manufacturers that contributed one million condoms to support the board's reproductive health programmes are Karex Industries Sdn Bhd, Medical Latex Dua Bhd, Nulutex Sdn Bhd, SSN Medical

Products Sdn Bhd, Female Health Company Sdn Bhd, Pleasure Latex Products Sdn Bhd and Takaso Rubber Products Sdn Bhd.

Napsiah noted that condoms are the second most used birth control items in Malaysia, after the female contraceptive pills. "Surveys with married couples show that many still prefer contraceptive pills over condoms. Somehow, the wives can be counted on to take their pills. The husbands also see the pill as a more convenient birth control option than condoms," she said.

Karex, which is the world's biggest condom manufacturer and contributing to 15 per cent of the world's demand for the contraceptive, sees a healthy demand growth in Malaysia.

Currently, about 80 to 90 million pieces of condoms are sold locally per year. "With more campaigns on reproductive health, safe sex and family planning, we see condom demand growing at eight to nine per cent a year," said Karex executive director Goh Miah Kiat.

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Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister **Tan Sri Bernard Dompok** (third from left) officiates at the handover of one million pieces of condoms from manufacturers to the National Population and Family Development Board. With him are (from left) National Population and Family Development Board director-general **Datuk Aminah Abdul Rahman**, Malaysian Rubber Export Promotion Council chairman **Datuk Billy Abit Joo** and National Population and Family Development Board chairperson **Tan Sri Napsiah Omar**. Pic by Nurul Shafina Jemenon