Minister of Trade Monitors Price of Basic Goods and Presented Awards to Business Communities in Batam

Batam, July 23rd, 2012 – The Indonesian Minister of Trade, Gita Wirjawan today on, Monday (7/23), conducted a duty tour to Batam to monitor the price trend and the availability of stock in this city. “We have chosen Batam city as its has a specific characteristic of a non-producing region, in which 90% of its basic needs are supplied from outside Batam, which therefore needs special monitoring,” said the Minister of Trade.

The duty tour on H+2 of the fasting month had three agendas. Firstly, the Minister of Trade monitored the price trend and the availability of the stock at Aviari Market, in Batam. Secondly, the Minister will present awards to certain business entities that are friendly and have shown concern for consumer protection. The Minister will also present awards to certain markets that provide accurate measurement when transacting. Thirdly, the Minister will officially install recalibration posts at certain markets which provide temporary substitute scales for the merchants during the recalibration of their scales by the metrology officers.

Price Trend and Supply of Basic Commodities in Aviari Market

Based on the data from the Industry and Trade Agency of the Riau Island Province, the average prices of the basic commodities in Batam city were relatively stable such as rice, sugar, cooking oil, wheat flour, red chili and shallots, except for the price of beef, chicken meat and eggs that have increased. The increase of these three commodities not only was in Batam city but also in several other big cities. The rise in the prices of chicken meat and eggs was mainly due to the increase of the price of livestock feed such as corn and soya beans from abroad. While the price increase of beef was due to the rise in demand of the commodity that usually increases in the beginning of fasting month.

Before visiting Aviari Market, the Minister of Trade visited the “Flea Market” held at the Tanjung Uma Village, Sub-District of Lubuk Baja-Batam. The goods sold were bundled in packages containing 5 kg of rice, 2 kg of sugar, 2 kg of cooking oil and 2 kg wheat flour priced at Rp. 50,000 per package. The flea market used a coupon system in which the coupons were distributed specially to people with limited buying power so that these basic commodity packages will reach the targeted consumers.
The Minister of Trade conveyed his appreciation to the Government of the Riau Island Province and Batam City and the other Regional Governments for their initiatives to hold such “flea markets” in anticipating the national religious celebrations such as the fasting month.

**Joint Supervisory by the Integrated Team on Distributed Goods**

In the duty tour to Batam this time, the Minister of Trade with the Integrated Team for Supervision on Distributed Goods (TPBB) had a chance to inspect the distributed goods. “The supervision is necessary to ensure the safety of the consumers and that the Ministry of Trade is fulfilling its duty in protecting the consumers rights,” said the Minister.

In approaching the holy month of Ramadhan and the Idul Fitri 1433 H celebration and to enhance consumer protection, the TPBB team persistently supervises distributed goods both food products and non-food products. After their inspection that was conducted in mid July in Manado, today on Monday (7/23) the TPBB Team conducted inspections in several areas in Batam City, of the Riau Island Province, in particular the Aviari market complex in the Nagoya Hill shopping center.

In the inspection at Aviari market, the team was able to identify some eating utensils made of melamine (under the brand name of SF) and swaballast lamps (brand name of AMS) that were suspected of being non-complying to the SNI standard. Apart from that, at the same location they found several electronic products such as cellular telephones (under the brand name of SK), blenders (branded as SS) and rice cookers (branded NS) that were not equipped with instruction manuals nor warranty cards written in Indonesian language.

In the second location of their inspection, the Nagoya Hill shopping center, the Team also found some melamine eating utensils under the brand name of SF, that were suspected of being non-complying to SNI.

In this duty tour, the Minister of Trade also took the opportunity to educate the merchants and the public to understand the importance of the safety aspect towards the consumers’ health and security in using the products and by ensuring that the products have met the standard. The results from the inspection by the TPBB team would be followed up by a test in the laboratory to check whether the product complies with the regulation and standard.

**Presentation of Awards**

In this opportunity, the Minister of Trade presented the “Star Award” to several merchants in the traditional market, local retailers and national retailers that have shown concern towards the consumers’ interests and are customer-friendly. This award is provided as an acknowledgement and appreciation from the Ministry of Trade to merchants or retailers that “persistently” show effort to be responsible merchants in trading goods by maintaining the principles of security, safety, health and environmental aspects of the products sold and internalize the principles of protecting the consumers’ rights in every line of their business.
From the 33 traditional markets, 6 local retailers and 12 national retailers in Batam city, there were three entities that were nominated, representing the traditional markets, local retailers and national-scale retailers. The selection was done through supervision and evaluation on the products sold at their outlets and the facilities that support the services to the customers. The Evaluating Team consisted of representatives from the Industry and Trade Agency of Batam City, representative from APRINDO of Batam, People’s Institution for Consumer Protection (LPKSM) and the Directorate of Consumer Empowerment.

The “Star Award” was presented to the traditional market, Pasar Penuin (Pembangunan Nusa Indah), the local retailer, Jodoh Centre BCS Mall and the national retailer, Carrefour at Kepri Mall. This award is expected to encourage others to follow suit and promote more merchants to be more responsible and show more care to consumers by protecting the consumers’ rights.

The criteria in evaluating these merchants include aspects such as the service to the customers, the compliance to the regulations on consumer protection, the lay-out of the outlet, the knowledge of the staff on consumer protection, and the extent of domestic-made products being sold at these outlets. Another factor that was scrutinized was the uniqueness of their services for example, whether the merchants provide facilities for senior citizens, pregnant mothers and for customers with special needs and whether the merchants are promoting the use of domestic-made products and promoting the local culture as well as whether the merchants support environmental conservation.

In the same location, the Minister of Trade also presented an award to Pasar Aviari as a **Role Model for Traditional Markets in Providing Accurate Measurement.** In addition to the award, the Minister of Trade also officially presented to this traditional market a metrology post, as a facility for recalibration of scales, which also provides weighing scales for temporary use while the merchants’ scales are being recalibrated.

The recalibration Post is part of the market’s facility to provide accurate measurement. In case the customers are in doubt of the measurement, the customers can re-weigh the goods at the recalibration posts to obtain the accurate quantity of the goods that they just bought.

Pasar Aviari has been prepared as one of the Markets in Batam city that provides Accurate Measurement since the beginning of 2012, so that all the measuring equipment used at this market are legally marked and valid; The merchants using the measuring equipment have been provided with explanation on the accurate usage of these equipment and already understand the consequences if there is any misusage of the equipment; The management of the market also has full understanding of the accurate usage of the measuring equipment and shall routinely advocate the users in applying the accurate measurement with the available equipment; The management of the market also has complete data on the number of measuring equipment, the types and the name of the owners of these equipment; the Municipality Government of Batam has implemented a sustainable work program in advocating the usage of the accurate measurement equipment.
According to the Minister of Trade, ever since legal metrology was appointed under the responsibility of the local government, the services for calibration and recalibration of the measuring tools and its supervision have not been optimal. Therefore, protecting the rights of the customers in obtaining accurate measurement is still far from the expectation. The District/Municipality Government is required to prioritize their program for metrology by installing a special Work Unit for this matter and establish a Legal Metrology UPTD as stipulated in Government Regulation No. 38 of 2007 as mentioned above.

To enhance the services of the Legal Metrology Unit and to ensure accurate measurement, the Ministry of Trade has set strategic steps by implementing the Champion Program for Accurate Measurement which includes Programs to establish markets that have accurate measurement, to designate certain Regions that Uphold Accurate Measurement and enhance the knowledge of the local government, the merchants and the public on Legal Metrology.

At the end of 2011, the Ministry of Trade has officially appointed Singkawang city as the first region for Accurate Measurement, and in 2012 there were 3 (three) cities that have been appointed namely Batam, Balikpapan, and Surakarta. In 2010, there were 56 markets designated as markets with Accurate Measurement and in 2012, another 30 markets, including Aviari market in Batam city that was also appointed.

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