

Headline : Exempt charitable organisations from tax

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GST ON NGOs

Exempt charitable organ

WE have been repeatedly told that the government is committed to ensuring that people are not burdened by the Goods and Services Tax (GST). However, much is unclear, and many are still searching for answers on GST-related items and services.

As head of a non-governmental organisation (NGO), I wish to point out the huge burden that falls on NGOs, which cannot register with the Customs Department, as we have no income.

We provide highly subsidised dialysis treatment to needy kidney patients. Most of our patients are referred to us by government hospitals, as they cannot afford life-long treatment at private centres. The subsidy of RM50 per patient per treatment has not been increased since its implementation in 2002.

While we are committed to helping these patients, the irony of it is that we are burdened with the input tax from everyone around us, from medical suppliers and

distributors to vendors and porters. It is not just a matter of cost but also a matter of safety that we worry about.

Referring to the exemption on medical disposables and drugs, which are not exempted. We request an additional six per cent surcharge on transportation, for which the rate recently increased. We are also concerned about the impact of those related to was

According to the Global Burden of Disease Study, published in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, obesity became a bigger public-health problem than

Today, according to the latest edition of the study, more than 2.1 billion people — nearly 30 per cent of the global population — are overweight or obese. That is nearly two and a half times the number of adults and children who are undernourished. Obesity is responsible for about five per cent of deaths worldwide.

This crisis is not just a pressing health concern; it is also a threat to the global economy. The total economic impact of obesity is about US\$2 trillion (RM7.3 trillion) a year, or 2.8 per cent of world gross domestic product — roughly equivalent to the economic damage caused by smoking or armed vi-

poverty, including fatness in the world's developing countries. These industries are boosted by calorie-dense foods that were previously unavailable in these areas.

Indeed, that development is especially significant. Obesity is a major cause of scarce resources in these areas.

In the meantime, the island's food supply is the worst in the world. In 20