

28/06/1997

#### Latin American connection

MALAYSIAN businessmen are urged to take advantage of the upcoming general meeting of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council in Santiago, Chile to establish and boost business links with Latin America.

Chilean Ambassador Octavio Errazuriz said the meeting would provide opportunities for Malaysian businessmen to meet their counterparts from the Latin American countries and enable them to establish sector-specific business links.

With more than 60 per cent participation from the business sector, the meeting would be an excellent avenue to encourage Malaysian businessmen to venture into specific sectors that they are interested in, Errazuriz said at a briefing of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Latin American countries attending the meeting include not only the Latin American member countries of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council namely Mexico, Columbia, Peru and Chile but also Argentina and Brazil, said director of the council Enrique Subercaseaux.

Malaysia's trade relation with Latin American countries have been on the uptrend in recent years.

Last year Malaysia's total trade with Chile stood at RM590 million, while with Brazil and Argentina, total trade stood at RM1.709 billion and RM895 million, respectively.

The council's 12th general meeting, the first ever to be held in Latin America, will be from September 30 to October 2 and is expected to be attended by over 1,000 government, business and academic leaders.

Themed "Transpacific Partnership: Implementing Trade and Investment Opportunities", the general meeting would also be attended by some heads of state and trade ministers from Asia Pacific countries, including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

Related events that will be held at the same time in Santiago include the Apec (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Business Advisory Council, and the meeting of Latin American and East Asian trade ministers.

The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council is a 23-member non-governmental organisation consisting of government, business and academic leaders.

It provides a forum for discussion and cooperation in a wide range of economic areas, including trade and investment policy, Pacific economic outlook, financial and capital markets and human resource development.

Based in Singapore, its work agenda at regional and global levels is integrated with those of the Apec forum and the World Trade Organisation.

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