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NEW ZEALAND URGED TO COLLABORATE TO TAP ASIA-PACIFIC BROADCASTING MARKET

By: Azman Hashim

AUCKLAND, July 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia today called on New Zealand broadcasting stations to form strategic collaboration with Malaysian players to tap the three-billion strong population of the Asia-Pacific region.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said Malaysia would like to see a win-win collaboration among the players of something close to Asian ambience and a Hollywood-type of ingenuity.

"The result, Made-In-Malaysia programmes which would find enthusiastic audiences across the Asia Pacific," he said when speaking at a luncheon hosted by the Northern Chapter of the New Zealand-Malaysia Business Council (NZMBC) here in conjunction with his five-day official visit to New Zealand.

Mohamed said Malaysia and New Zealand's broadcasting industry players should put themselves in strategic positions and understand the special needs and preferences of the huge Asia-Pacific marketplace in order to benefit from the collaboration.

He said Malaysia recognises New Zealand's creativity, innovation and high-quality programmes and it could assist the advancement of local players in the broadcasting industry.

"We applaud contents that reinforce common values and aspirations. In turn, we expect you to make the effort to find out what is important to us and reflect this in your Made-For-Asia programmes," he added.

Mohamed said the Malaysian Government would provide everything possible to pave the way for the success of the collaboration as the country moves into the new era in broadcasting communications.

He said in this context, the government has been actively reviewing the whole regulatory framework to stimulate creativity without compromising on the values and traditions of the society and those acceptable by universal standards.

"We had recently amended the Broadcasting Act while the Multimedia Convergence Act will be introduced later this year to accommodate new developments and changes in broadcasting technology.

"Other laws, still in the pipeline, will enable us to use the information technology to deliver value in new ways, such as distance-learning and electronic government, which is one of the flagship applications of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC)," he added.

Mohamed said business and trade relations between Malaysia and New Zealand have been progressing well, on the right track and expected to be further enhanced in the near future.

He said Malaysia is currently New Zealand's largest market within the Southeast Asia region.

"Last year, total trade between the two countries amounted to US\$610 million (RM1,524 million) which accounted for about 0.4 percent of Malaysia's overall trade," he added.

He said Malaysia's ever-growing economy and trade are largely inspired by the hardworking Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and the country's political stability as well as the ability of the people to accept changes and work closely together.

"We hope that the Prime Minister will continue to successfully lead us into the next millennium as the country and its people still need his able leadership. Our people are also ready to give their fullest cooperation in

order to achieve our vision to be a developed nation by the year 2020," he added. -- BERNAMA.

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