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## Norwegians looking for partners

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NORWEGIAN companies are now looking for Malaysian partnership to further enhance their stake in the medical field in Malaysia, said Norwegian Trade Council manager for medical equipment, Mr Knut Larsen.

Speaking at the press preview of the 2nd South-East Asian Healthcare Show & Conference '97 in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Larsen said Norwegian medical companies are doing so because they see a potentially large market in the region.

"In the next 20 to 30 years, the Asian market for medical equipment and services is going to expand since Asia will experience a high percentage of elderly population.

"Since there hasn't been much attention given to this part of the world, Norwegian companies are now realising Asia's huge potential and is coming over," he added.

As separate entities, he said Norwegian small- and medium-industries have neither the financial ability nor the staying power to move into the Asia-Pacific region.

"As they position themselves to compete in Asian markets, Malaysia can expect a large flow of trade and investments here.

"Norwegian companies have a lot of experience in providing aid worldwide since we have the human resources and equipment," he said.

Norway supports US\$1 billion a year in medical aid and supply some US\$300,000 worth of medical supplies to war-torn countries such as Bosnia and Rwanda.

"Norwegian companies have realised that they need to widen out the spectrum of products especially when it comes to Malaysia," he said.

So far, there are about 60 Norwegian companies in Malaysia, majority of them in the manufacturing concerns such as Jotun Paints, Dynochem, Scanlab, Scanasia and Viking Askim.

High technology niche products in environmental technology, oil and gas, shipping gear, hydropower, fishing and aquaculture, automotive parts and defence are among areas where there is cooperation between the two countries.

An example of a company interested in Malaysia is Norceme Norway, a medical equipment company.

Its president Mr Jan Karlsen said Norcema is planning to make its presence felt in Malaysia especially in the area of field hospitals.

Norcema manufactures a flexible medical emergency hospital unit composed of different modules called the Norwegian Mobile Hospital and Disaster Unit (NorHosp).

Karlsen said he had discussion with the Malaysian army to see if they were interested in purchasing NorHosp since NorHosp was designed for surgical treatment of both injuries sustained in disasters and armed conflicts.

"However, NorHosp can also be used for other purposes, such as the introduction of health services to rural areas."

Norcema has a joint venture partnership with a Japanese pharmaceutical company in which it invested US\$500,000 and owns 42 per cent.

Karlsen said that its partnership and office in Tokyo will act as the regional centre for its activities in the Asian region.

Besides NorHosp, Norcema offers physiotherapy, lifting, decontaminated equipment and antidecubitus (a special mattress to prevent bed-sores).

Norcema will have a booth at the 2nd South-East Asian Healthcare Show & Conference `97.

The 2nd South-East Asian Healthcare Show & Conference `97 was sparked by last year's success on "Rehabilitation of the Disabled and Care for the Elderly" show.

This year's event will emphasise on emergency medicine, traumatology and sports medicine. This includes emergency and disaster preparation equipment, occupational health and safety measures, rehabilitation, home care, medical laboratory and sports medicine.

Organised by ABC Exhibitions, the event will be held on April 3-5 at the Putra World Trade Centre and will be officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

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