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## Two councils to spearhead development of aerospace industry

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LANGKAWI, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced today the setting up of two councils - the National Aerospace Council and National Aerospace Co-ordinating Body - to spearhead the development of the industry.

In addition, he also announced the setting up of the Malaysian agency for space administration (Masa), upgrading of the Department of Civil Aviation and proposed setting up of a Civil Aviation Authority.

Launching the national aerospace blueprint prepared by the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology, Dr Mahathir said the council, to oversee the development of the industry, would adopt the smart partnership principle participated by both public and private sectors.

The MIGHT team studying the blueprint, requested by Dr Mahathir at the launching of Lima '95, has asked the Prime Minister and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to be the chairman and deputy of the council respectively.

Dr Mahathir said this appointment would be considered by the Government.

The 45-point blueprint by MIGHT was endorsed by the Cabinet last September. It focuses on national strategy such as infrastructure, development and programmes.

Areas covered include civil and military applications incorporating general and commercial aviation, aircraft manufacturing, maintenance and overhaul, systems, space, human resource development and research and development.

Dr Mahathir said the co-ordinating body which would act as a reference point for the various aerospace activities and investments would consolidate the current initiatives in the aerospace sector and further spearhead involvement in the industry.

"It will become the reference point for the managing of offset programmes and act as an intermediary for local and foreign interests in the industry."

Dr Mahathir also said the upgrading of the DCA was necessary to enable it to meet the challenges of the new unexplored territory.

"The proposed Civil Aviation Authority will provide the industry with monitoring as well as regulatory functions in the area of airworthiness, air traffic control and aerospace product and services," he said.

A national human resource development programme will be set up to ensure that the quantity, skills and costs of personnel is adequate and competitive. "It will take into the account the various categories of labour required in the aerospace industry such as tool makers, aircraft engineers, test pilots and system analysts.

"In addition, Malaysia hopes to establish a premier educational centre for aerospace to serve the domestic and regional need for education and training," he said.

On Masa, Dr Mahathir said it would further strengthen Malaysia's entry into the space sector.

It will oversee the efficient management of space ventures including the development of a national satellite programme to help the development of industrial and technology capability in the area.

The Prime Minister said the focus of recommendations in the blueprint was on the Government because it set the legislative framework and policy.

"However the success of the industry is a responsibility that goes much

further than the Government.

"Action and participation are required by all the stakeholders."

He envisioned if the blueprint was implemented, Malaysia would have an aerospace industry "that will be globally competitive and widely acknowledged as what has been achieved by electronics and automotive industries".

Dr Mahathir said the Government believed that the aerospace industry was very important to the overall development of the nation.

"There is a critical need for the restructuring of the aerospace industry and its players.

"The industry itself encompasses so many subsectors from aviation to space, from overhaul and maintenance activities to the manufacturing of the whole aircraft.

"Malaysia is a small country with a small domestic market and limited resources.

"On the other hand, the aerospace industry is very regulated and integrated and support those companies which are already established and possessed a strong reputation," Dr Mahathir said.

As such, the limited resources will have to be shared with other fast expanding sectors - automotive, oil, gas and multimedia.

"It is therefore imperative that the industry adopts the national vision as its main thrust and approaches the aerospace development task on a consolidated basis," he added.

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