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APEC-ACID'98

ACID'98 TO EMPHASIS ON E-COMMERCE AND GREATER TRANSPARENCY

KUALA LUMPUR, June 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia, one of the leading Asean countries implementing the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system for customs clearance, will be the host for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Customs-Industry Dialogue (ACID'98) on June 8.

The two-day meeting will discuss on pertinent Customs issues that have profound implications on the region's trade and economic performance, with an emphasis on further usage of electronic commerce (e-commerce) trade facilitation system.

In a press conference, Deputy Director General of the Royal Customs and Excise department Datuk Abdul Rashid Haji Bolong said the ACID'98 will be conducted in a dialogue fashion similar to the Smart Partnership Dialogue introduced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Previously, he said, the conference was held in a symposium manner and some of the participants had to forego attending discussions on topics they were interested in because they were held at other discussions being hold at the same time.

More than 100 participants including business and government representatives from the 18 APEC member countries and the three new admissions: Russia, Vietnam and Peru are expected to attend the event, he said.

He said in keeping with the theme of "Meeting the Challenges of the Next Millennium" the dialogue will cover three key areas including human resource development in the global trading environment, information technology as well as integrity and cooperation between the Customs and the business sectors to support global trade facilitation.

Abdul Rashid said among others, the objectives of ACID'98 are to achieve greater transparency and better facilitation of trade within the region.

"It also aims at presenting a common position of the Customs to important organisations that play a significant role in global trade," he said.

ACID'98 is being jointly organised by the Royal Customs and Excise department and the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (NCCIM), with worldwide express package distribution company, United Parcel Service (UPS) as the official express carrier and main sponsor.

UPS regional director (Global Facilitation & Customs Operations for Asia Pacific region) James Goh later presented a RM234,000 (US\$60,000) cheque to Abdul Rashid.

Goh said the APEC Sub-committee on Customs Procedures (APEC-SCCP) is definitely looking at leveraging the internet medium during the conference as E-commerce through internet is cheaper and easier, but "the concern is on the safety features and viability of the orders."

On other development, Abdul Rashid said the EDI system, which proved to be very efficient and fast, will be extended for use at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and the second link in Johor Baharu, Johor soon. -- BERNAMA

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