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APEC INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR TO BOOST INVESTORS' CONFIDENCE

By: Zainab Mohd Yatim

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 7 (Bernama) -- The Apec International Trade Fair '98, to be held at the Mines Exhibition Centre from Nov 13 to 16, will be an excellent venue for Apec economies and Malaysian companies, in particular, to prove their resilience in facing the current economic difficulty, the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade), the host of the trade fair, said today.

The exhibition is staged to coincide with the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum from Nov 12 to 19, which will witness the presence of top-level economic officials and ministers, captains of industry as well as statesmen.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will officially open the trade fair themed "Enhancing Global Competitiveness Through Technology and Human Resources Development", on Nov 13.

Matrade said the trade fair will focus on new technologies and skilled manpower that contribute to the development of Apec economies.

It will also feature products, technologies and programmes related to "emergency preparedness" to build expertise in the area of environmental crisis in the region.

Matrade expects the fair to attract some 20,000 visitors, including trade buyers from overseas.

"It will be an excellent venue for Apec economies to promote their products, services and technologies," said a Matrade official.

Sixty Malaysian companies and exhibitors from all member economies have confirmed their participations in the trade fair.

Among the Malaysian firms are Petronas, DRB-Hicom Group, Telekom Malaysia Bhd, Golden Hope Plantations, Renong Group, Southern Bank Bhd, Celcom Malaysia Sdn Bhd and Nestle Products Sdn Bhd.

The exhibition venue, measuring 10,000 sq m, will be opened to trade visitors from 10am to 7pm daily and to the public from 4pm to 7pm daily.

Among products and services which will be promoted include high-tech computer parts and components, food products, furniture, banking products, automotive parts and engineering consultancy services.

Nestle Products Sdn Bhd said it will use the trade fair to reiterate its commitment to the manufacturing and marketing of halal food products.

"Besides supporting the government's effort to promote halal food products, we will also assist the Muslim Consumer Association of Malaysia to create better awareness amongst consumers, particularly Muslim consumers that there is a choice between halal and non-halal food products," said its corporate affairs manager Tengku Marina Badlishah.

Nestle's participation is also with the objective to provide on-hand information to consumers and visitors on Nestle's halal range of food products and to inform on its halal processes locally and overseas.

The company currently exports nearly RM170 million of halal products to over 40 countries and plans to expand its export market to other Muslim countries in Central Asia in the near future.

In conjunction with the meeting, Matrade will organise the Apec Business Forum from Nov 13 to 16, to allow member economies to make presentations on trade and investment opportunities available in the respective countries.

According to Matrade's official, the forum is also with the objective to disseminate information and to strengthen trade and investment between

21 Apec economies.

So far, 11 economies will make presentations at the complimentary forum, which will make available 90 seats for every presentations.

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