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3,000 delegates may attend road congress

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Three thousand delegates are expected to attend the 21st World Road Congress to be held at the Putra World Trade Centre in October next year, Works Ministry secretary-general Datuk Yahya Yaacob said today.

He said bookings for about 40 per cent of exhibition space and four national pavilions have also been confirmed for the exhibition to be held in conjunction with the congress.

"This is very encouraging as I understand many other countries are booking and finalising their exhibition space," he said.

A signing ceremony was also held after the briefing where 10 companies and three more countries confirmed their participation.

The World Road Congress is held once every four years and is organised by the World Roads Association. The last congress was held in Montreal, Canada, in 1995.

Yahya said organising committees at three levels have been set up to organise next year's congress.

The first is the Host Committee headed by Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, which will welcome foreign dignitaries and ministers attending the congress.

"The second is the Organising Committee comprising representatives from various Government ministries and agencies to help prepare and organise the congress," he said.

The third, the Congress Team comprising 14 sub-committees and is regarded as the actual working team that sets up the congress.

He said the Road Engineering Association of Malaysia has been appointed by the ministry to undertake the organising and financing of the congress.

During the same briefing, REAM chairman Tan Sri Wan Abdul Rahman Yaacob said the congress will be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 3, 1999.

He added that a plenary ministers' session for ministers in charge of roads will be held on the first day. The theme will be Is Privatisation of Road Infrastructure the Answer for Accelerated Road Development in the 21st Century.

"Five sessions are also planned. They are the Major Cities, Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia, Asian Highways, World Bank, and the joint World Roads Association-Organisation of Economic Cooperation for Development sessions.

"Six cross-linking sessions and a special session on Transport in the 21st Century and their consequences will also be held," he said, adding that there will also be technical visits to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang, Light Rail Transit System Two and several highway projects.

REAM is also organising an essay competition in conjunction with the congress. Themed Infrastructure and Transportation for the 21st Century, the first prize team consisting four people will stand to win RM4,000 while the second prize will be RM2,000. The team winning the third prize will get RM1,000.

The World Roads Association is made up of 92 government members and 2,900 other types of members from 113 countries.

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