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## Promoting Malaysia in West Asia

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THE Malaysia-Arab Foundation (MAF) seeks to promote better business and investment relationship between Malaysian and Arabian organisations.

MAF's executive director Abdu Bushara said the foundation's main objective is to provide Arab countries with more information about Malaysia and to encourage them to buy Malaysian products.

He told reporters that MAF's plan to promote Malaysian products in West Asia came from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's who called on all Malaysians to buy local products.

Abdu sees the lower ringgit and the high quality of local goods make Malaysian goods more competitive in the international market.

He estimates that MAF's plan to promote Malaysia in all Arab countries will take between two and three years, adding that the foundation takes a long-term rather than a short-term view.

MAF will organise its first exhibition with the "Buy Malaysian Products" theme in Oman between May 5 and May 11 while other exhibitions will be held in Egypt and in Jordan, said Abdu.

To better disseminate Malaysian news to West Asia, Abdu said there are plans to set up a news agency in Kuala Lumpur.

MAF has placed the 21 Arab countries into four categories. Each category will have a permanent Malaysia-Arab trade centre to exhibit Malaysian-made products.

The foundation has also signed an agreement with Sukom Ninety Eight Bhd - the organiser of the 1998 Commonwealth Games - to publish "Majalah Malaysia" in Arabic, Bahasa Malaysia, English and Persian for distribution in Malaysia and West Asia.

In addition to promoting Malaysian products, MAF will also promote tourism, food and Islamic "fashionable" clothings, among other things.

MAF's objective is to promote better understanding between the peoples of Malaysia and the Arab world in history, culture, education, business, economy and religion.

The foundation also aims to work with business and professional organisations, community groups, media associations and youth bodies from both Malaysia and the Arab nations.

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