

16 MAR 1999

Ling-Aviation

M'SIA WILL CONTINUE LIBERALISATION POLICY ON AIR TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

KUALA LUMPUR, March 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will continue to pursue its liberalisation policy to enhance accessibility by actively establishing more liberal air services agreements and traffic rights arrangements with other countries.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said Malaysia would also continue to lay emphasis on the development of facilities and infrastructure necessary to support the growth of the air transport industry.

"Particularly, attention will be given to addressing success factors and long-range plans to meet the requirements of the air transport industry," he said when opening the two-day Asia-Pacific Regional Aviation conference which started here today.

"I am confident that the underlying strengths of the Malaysian economy in particular will see us through and I remain optimistic about the future of the air transport industry in Malaysia," Ling said.

His speech was read out by his deputy Datuk Dr Ibrahim Saad.

Ling said, even during the economic downturn, the aviation industry in Malaysia still chalked up some impressive achievement, citing the successful completion of the new gateway KL International Airport (KLIA) in the middle of last year.

"Again on Dec 1 1998, our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad officially launched the export of the first Aerotiga or SME MD3-160 aircraft to America.

"Our achievements have been made possible because of our hard work, dedication and professionalism. More importantly, they are the results of the cooperation and smart partnerships between the public and the private sector and this must be intensified in the coming years," he added.

Ling said, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasts that international scheduled passenger numbers are anticipated to grow by an average annual growth rate of 5.5 per cent between 1998 and 2002.

Meanwhile for South East Asia, the average annual growth rate is 4.4 per cent while for the South Pacific it is 4.3 per cent.

"The lower growth figures are primarily due to the impact of the financial crisis on operations," he said.

Also present at the function was Malaysia Airlines Executive Vice President Datuk Bashir Ahmad.

--BERNAMA

APG AO