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PEG-AUTOMATIVE

PEG & GM LAUNCH APEC-WIDE PROGRAMME TO ASSIST AUTO COMPANIES

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 (Bernama) -- The Apec Partnership for Equitable Growth (PEG) has joined hands with General Motor Corp (GM) of the U.S. to roll out an Apec-wide automotive development programme for small and medium sized automotive companies.

The programme was launched and announced in Seoul recently when PEG and GM signed an agreement to push forward the Apec Automotive Apprenticeship (Apec AAA) programme.

In a statement today, PEG's chief executive officer Dr Shafiq Sit Abdullah said that the goal of the programme was to increase the competitiveness of the small to mid-sized companies within the region and to prepare them for the global market.

"The outlook for the automobile industry in the Asia Pacific region is strongly positive, and this programme will assist small-to-mid-sized companies in the Asia Pacific region to work alongside global companies such as GM in a partnership which would give mutual benefit to the participating companies," he said.

Dr Shafiq signed the agreement on PEG's behalf while GM's Asia Pacific Region New Business Ventures director-in-charge, Alan Perriton, signed on behalf of GM.

Dr Shafiq said that the AAA programme, which is modelled after the GM's programme, would provide the participating companies with opportunities to cooperate in areas like technology exchange, improvement of work efficiency, product design and product quality management.

"This (programme) will be Apec's first economic technology cooperation in the automotive area that involves both the private and public sectors," he said.

He said that GM as the largest car company in the world had been active in establishing business collaborations with small to medium sized businesses.

"During the last four years, GM had signed numerous contracts with automobile companies, especially with small to mid-sized businesses," he said.

In Korea alone this deal amounted to about US\$1.0 billion (RM3.8 billion).

Perriton said GM had been taking steps to find ways to encourage a wider spectrum of small to mid-sized companies to participate in its US\$10 billion (RM38 billion) GM purchase plan.

PEG which was established in 1998 via the mandate of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Economic Leaders, aims to channel out efforts to see balanced development and a more level playing field among the Apec member nations.

The founder patron of PEG is Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Its board of directors comprise leading members of the Apec Business Advisory Council. -- BERNAMA

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