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RAFIDAH-APEC

APEC AMM TO REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF ONGOING INITIATIVES

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- The 15th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministerial Meeting (AMM) from Oct 17-18 in Bangkok, Thailand will review the implementation of ongoing APEC initiatives and set the framework for activities in 2004, said International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

She said that Thailand, as chair of APEC 2003, has set the theme "A World of Differences: Partnership for the Future" to reflect the ability of APEC's diverse membership to cooperate and collaborate for mutual economic development.

Rafidah will lead an 18-member Malaysian delegation comprising officials from the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs, Domestic Trade, Health, Finance, and Bank Negara to the AMM.

She would also accompany Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting on Oct 20-21.

Speaking to reporters after attending her Ministry's "Quality Day" Rafidah said that the ongoing APEC Initiatives in 2003 to be reviewed include the incorporation of transparency standards in rules, regulations and administrative procedures in areas such as investment, intellectual property and customs procedures.

Others are increasing trade facilitation activities in customs procedures, e-commerce, technical standards and business mobility to reduce transaction costs by five percent by 2006.

Another initiative is pursuing greater market access for digital products and services in areas such as tariff elimination, services liberalisation and intellectual property rights protection, particularly in addressing optical disk piracy.

Also to be reviewed is the further strengthening of the multilateral trading system through World Trade Organisation (WTO) related capacity and confidence building programmes in support of the Doha Development Agenda.

Rafidah said that the ministers will also discuss new 2003 deliverables for implementation in 2004 which include the work programme to support WTO negotiation post-Cancun.

Others include the Implementation Plan for the Energy Security Initiative which focuses on energy information exchange, emergency response mechanisms, oil data updates and security of energy supply.

Also to be discussed is the Action Plan for Structural Reform which focuses on capacity building in areas such as competition policy, commercial law, deregulation and corporate governance.

Others are Private Sector Supply Chain Security Guidelines covering areas such as physical security and access control of premises, procedural and documentation security and crisis management.

The progress in the implementation of the APEC SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) Action Plan to rebuild business confidence and enhance preparedness in addressing possibility of SARS resurgence, will also be discussed.

Rafidah said that the Ministers will also discuss reform of APEC to rationalise and streamline APEC activities to achieve more focused and substantive outcomes and further enhance APEC relevance in the global economy.

She said that Malaysia's key focus in APEC is on initiatives to facilitate secure trade, human capacity building and economic and technical

cooperation for more effective participation in the multilateral trading system and for shared prosperity in the Asia Pacific region. -- BERNAMA  
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