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LIMA-INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL COs WELCOME ASSURANCE TO CONTINUE LIMA

By: Mohd Arshi Daud

LANGKAWI, Oct 6 (Bernama) -- International companies, some of which have been participating in LIMA since its inception in 1991 welcome the assurance that the government would continue to host the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) after the resignation of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who would take over as Prime Minister when Dr Mahathir retires at the end of this month, had given the assurance that LIMA would be continued.

Ericsson AB, one of the "familiar faces" of the biennial event is keen to return to this resort island not only to explore new markets but also to establish contact and find business partners.

"It will be of interest for us to see LIMA continue to live on. We get access to high-level people from the Ministry of Defence, chief of armed forces and also companies which we sometime compete and sometime need to combine forces to bid for contracts," said Ericsson Microwave Systems AB director of sales and marketing Goran Gregerstrom.

"This is the kind of place to meet people from other companies. My impression is that these people will come here," he told Bernama during the seventh edition of LIMA that ended Sunday.

Gregerstrom said LIMA had directly and indirectly contributed to new sales for the company.

"It contributes I would say. There are many things which have to be done before you sign contract but I feel that our presence here is of importance not only for Malaysia but for the Southeast Asian region," he added.

For Saab AB, which has never failed to return to Langkawi since the first LIMA, meanwhile had gained from the presence of potential customers from neighbouring countries during the LIMA `03.

"We meet people from Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia. These customers are coming here," said Bo Rastedt senior vice president of Saab International.

Rastedt said it was during LIMA that Saab was able to meet "important people in Malaysia" in the same place as they were all gathered here.

"If you try to do that down in Kuala Lumpur, then you have to spend half a year," he added.

He also said that Langkawi was the best place to hold such a big event because its airport and harbour facilities "are not too crowded" for aircraft to park and vessels to dock while the airport's location away from high population area provided the needed environment for an aerial display.

"It is an interesting place for people to come and Langkawi can be a combination of a place to visit for the show and for vacation," he said.

Meanwhile the Boeing company, which never misses the show regards LIMA as a very important platform to further promote its presence in the Southeast Asian region and more importantly to its Malaysian customers.

"What is critical to this kind of show to companies like Boeing is that we see this as an opportunity to expand our presence and business base in the region," said Anthony M Parasida, vice president of the F/A-18 hornet programme for Boeing Integrated Defence Systems.

By participating in LIMA, Boeing had gained from the opportunity to establish contact with local companies that have the capability to undertake its offset programme through the transfer of technology.

"In fact, we have done some MOU (memorandum of understanding) signings here and have been in discussion on how we can further our relationship with Malaysian industries," he said.

In addition, LIMA provide companies with "easy access" to high-leveled individuals, something that is considered as a "big luck" for those keen to sell their products to the government.

"The Prime Minister spent 30 minutes in the cockpit of a F/A-18 that was put on static display, That's the kind of access that we will never have without a show like LIMA," he added.

David A Jones, Roll-Royce regional director for Malaysia said that for Rolls-Royce, LIMA is one way to demonstrate the company's commitment to Malaysia.

"We are raising our profile in the country. Malaysia is an important market for us," he added. -- BERNAMA

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