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ITNMB all set to ride upswing

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INSTITUT Terjemahan Negara Malaysia Bhd (ITNMB), which will celebrate its 10th anniversary in September, is set to ride the upswing of the country's multi-million ringgit conferences and exhibitions market.

Under the new chairmanship of Datuk Abdul Aziz Rahman, ITNMB is now moving into the market vigorously to provide translation and interpretation services for conferences and exhibitions organised in the country.

"We want to play a role in all conferences and exhibitions held in Malaysia.

"Translation work for conference documents and supply of interpreters for conferences and exhibitions will be our main driver," he said in an interview with Business Times in Kuala Lumpur recently.

The translation and interpretation services for conferences are believed to be worth millions of ringgit.

Abdul Aziz said the recent 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Kuala Lumpur alone offered RM800,000 worth of translation and interpretation works.

He said ITNMB managed to secure RM200,000 worth of translation and interpretation jobs at the NAM Summit.

NAM, which groups 116 nations, is the second largest gathering after the 191-member United Nations.

For conferences and conventions, ITNMB provides translation services for conference documents and multi-language interpreters together with the equipment.

In the past few years, Malaysia has increasingly become a hub for meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (Mice) centre with the number of conferences and exhibitions held in the country registering a significant jump every year.

Abdul Aziz said the conferences and conventions are the new market for translation organisations like ITNMB.

"We hope to work with conference organisers in promoting Malaysia as a hub for conferences.

"We can provide quality translation work and multi-language interpreters," he said, adding that some interpreters registered with ITNMB are native speakers of foreign languages.

ITNMB is now eyeing another large gathering to be held in Kuala Lumpur later this year - the 10th Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit.

Abdul Aziz said ITNMB expects to get a larger share of the translation and interpretation works from the OIC Summit, which will see the gathering of leaders from 57 Islamic nations.

ITNMB currently has 883 people registered as translators and 1,022 as

interpreters. These individuals are coordinated by ITNMB.

At the same time, the institute also organises courses relating to interpretation and translation for academicians and employees from the corporate sector.

Besides broadening its market share in translation and interpretation services for the Mice market, ITNMB is also seeking to expand its services in conventional translation markets such as books, annual reports and manuals.

Abdul Aziz said the translation market in the country, covering textbooks and general books, annual reports, as well as product and machinery manuals, are estimated to be between RM10 million and RM15 million a year.

From the total, ITNMB managed to obtain about RM5 million to RM6 million a year.

For this year, he said, ITNMB expects to chalk up RM6 million revenue from translation works, interpretation and courses.

"About 70 per cent of our income comes from services to companies (annual reports and documents) and 30 per cent from individuals," he said, adding that future income would be bigger if the institute can land more jobs from companies.

Abdul Aziz is confident that his background in the private sector will help ITNMB to realise its goals.

He said ITNMB - the former translation department of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka before it was incorporated as a limited company on September 14 1993, will no longer be a low-profile entity.

"We want to extend our outreach to customers and become more consumer-friendly so that our products (translated books) will be more acceptable," he said.

With 21 years of experience in the private sector and experience drawn from being with successful corporations like Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Malaysian Airline System Bhd, Bank Rakyat and Mentiga Corp Bhd, Abdul Aziz seeks to steer ITNMB more aggressively into the market.

After only a few months at the helm of ITNMB, he had already transformed the institute's operation to be market-driven by emphasising swift decisions and actions.

Plans in the pipeline include working with Universiti Malaya to introduce diploma courses in translation, interpretation and court interpreters; networking with Malay studies departments in universities in Sydney and Melbourne to market ITNMB's books; and the National Film Development Corp (Finas) to improve the quality of subtitles in local films.

"We are also talking with Westminster University in London to see how we can work together in introducing degree courses in translation and interpretation," he said.

Abdul Aziz said ITNMB will discuss with local television stations for translation and sub-titles works as well as with Astro on its foreign

programmes.

He is also mulling an Open Day so that the public can get to know ITNMB better. The institute's library, which keeps various translated books, will also be opened for the public.

The institute is now gearing up for the launch of a collection of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speeches which had been translated into Malay. Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail is scheduled to launch the collection on May 13.

Called "Koleksi Minda Perdana Menteri", the collection comprises 14 books, priced between RM25 and RM40 each.