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Lima will go on `even after PM retires'

reports on "Lima 2003" by Tony Emmanuel; Marina Emmanuel; Sharanjit PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was instrumental in establishing Lima, was yesterday assured of the Government's commitment that Lima will continue to be staged after he retires.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who conveyed this to Dr Mahathir during the opening ceremony of Lima 2003 at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre, told Dr Mahathir that he had consulted his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who had given his personal assurance that the Government would be committed to continue with Lima in the future.

"Rest assured we will continue your legacy. I hope our exhibitors and visitors alike will continue to support Lima."

Pointing to the fact that Lima had been synonymous with the Prime Minister, Najib said the event's inception, its growth and success was attributed to Dr Mahathir's vision and leadership.

"This," he added, "is not merely praise, but most certainly a fact that must be acknowledged and recorded."

In highlighting the development of Lima since its inception, Najib said Lima 2003 in the aerospace component sees the participation of over 600 exhibitors from 25 countries, as compared to 99 from 15 countries in Lima 1991.

"The number of static aircraft on display has also increased substantially from 23 in 1991 to 103 in Lima `03," he added.

On progress made in the maritime component, Najib said Lima this year had the participation of 204 exhibitors from 17 countries, plus 90 naval and commercial vessels.

"Exhibitors to Lima can also take heart of the fact that both the aerospace and maritime sectors have been accorded priority status as strategic sectors that the Government wishes to develop," said Najib.

"Therein lies the huge prospects of new collaborative arrangements, strategic alliances predicated on the concept of smart partnership with the objective of transferring industrial work and new technologies which Malaysia is seeking to acquire," he added.

Najib also expressed hope that international companies would respond to the challenge of meeting Malaysia's needs and aspirations by offering more, imaginative packages which went well beyond the traditional buyer and seller relationship.