

Malaysia to bid for seat on 36-member ICAO council

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia's civil aviation standards are on par with the most developed nations in the world.

The country has also significantly contributed to the advancement of international civil aviation in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Our aviation standards are very high, and we have always maintained a high level of safety and security standards, the two crucial components in civil aviation.

"We have also gained international

recognition for this," said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy, after receiving International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) president Roberto Kobeh Gonzalez at his office here yesterday.

Gonzalez is here on an official visit to look at the country's regulatory framework and aviation facilities as Malaysia is vying to be elected into the 36-member Council of the ICAO.

The minister said the time had come for Malaysia, an ordinary member in ICAO since 1958, to vie

for a council position.

Chan said that in terms of facilities, KL International Airport is among the world's top three, while AirAsia is a leading budget airline in Asia.

"Malaysia has also sponsored and trained 280 air traffic controllers from 47 countries at the Civil Aviation College of Malaysia and trained 753 airport fire-fighters from 37 countries," he said.

Malaysia has also offered to host the 45th Directors General of Civil

Aviation, Asia and Pacific conference next year after successfully hosting it in 1976 and 1994.

The country had, in the past, contributed experts, auditors and participated in safety audits at ICAO Asia Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group level.

To date, Malaysia had signed air service agreements with 85 countries including "open skies" type agreements, and the national carrier's routes reached six continents, while AirAsia had become a pioneer

low-cost carrier in Asia and Pacific.

Transport Ministry Deputy Secretary General (Planning) Datuk Long See Wool and ministry Undersecretary (Corporate and International Affairs) Leslie Leon were also present to meet Gonzalez.

Long said Malaysia charged a nominal air traffic control fee although it managed a highly busy airspace, while Leon said Malaysia's aviation industry contributed 8.8% or RM24.4bil to the country's gross domestic product.