

Malaysia Remains Asean's Leading Exporter To US
Bernama
February 10, 2012

NEW YORK, Feb 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysia remained Asean's leading exporter to the United States despite exports dipping 0.25 per cent to US\$23.694 billion between January and November last year.

Despite the slight drop in exports during the 11-month period, Malaysia remained the 18th largest import source for the United States, according to latest statistics released by the United States administration.

The Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) Commissioner in New York, Mohd Mustafa Abd Aziz, told Bernama that US-Malaysia two-way trade in 2011 was expected to stabilise with no drastic change.

The figures for the whole of 2011 is not yet available, however, two-way trade in 2010 amounted to US\$40 billion.

On trade development, Mustafa said based on his discussions with the business community in the United States, major companies were keen to diversify and look at Asean member countries instead of just relying on China as their sole supplier.

The general feeling amongst importers is that while China-made products may be slightly cheaper but costs was rising making Chinese supplies increasingly expensive.

Asean suppliers, despite their slightly higher prices, could be relied upon for quality products and post-sales services.

The country's biggest importer, Wal-Mart, is also looking at Asean for supplies in an attempt to reduce its dependence on China.

"The US market has a capacity to absorb greater imports from Malaysia as its economic recovery strengthens.

"We believe as unemployment declines, it will bolster consumer confidence, leading to greater spending and increased imports, and opening up opportunities for Malaysia's exports," Mustafa said.

The MATRADE office in New York is also promoting Malaysia's services sector.

One Malaysian company, Mustafa said, had successfully been involved in the much-acclaimed animation film series "Saladin" which was conceived and produced by Malaysia's Multimedia Development Corporation.

"Animation and technical effects, for example, constitute one area where Malaysian companies can tap opportunities," he said.

Aerospace is another field in which Malaysian companies can offer their expertise.

"Malaysian aerospace companies are already supplying all kinds of complex designs and services to the US aerospace industry," Mustafa added.

The New York MATRADE office, which has been organising the Malaysia Kitchen Programme, in an effort to popularise Malaysian food and promote exports of food products and ingredients, is also keen to increase its food supplies to US importers.

"The quality of Malaysian food products is considered to be good and reliable. Our food products are also competitive in prices. This is a strong impetus for us to increase our exports to the US," he said.

Halal food is another area that is inherent with good business.

An Arkansas-based company, Simmons, has been exporting frozen chicken to Malaysia and other Asean countries.

Simmons has obtained a halal certificate from Malaysia, which is widely recognised and makes it easier for US food companies to penetrate into the Gulf and other Middle Eastern countries.

Mustafa said Simmons could coordinate with the Illinois-based Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America which works closely with Malaysia's Department of Islamic Development, a halal certifying authority.

"By locating to Malaysia, Simmons could even set up a plant there and export processed food products out of Malaysia," Mustafa added.

---BERNAMA

Copyright © 2012 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=644749>