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MARRYING HIGH TECHNOLOGY WITH HALAL PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

MATRADE calls upon local companies to invest in technology in developing their Halal products and services

SATURDAY, 8 APRIL 2017, KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE), the organiser of Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS), encourages Malaysian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to up their efforts in incorporating new technologies in the development of their Halal products or services.

MATRADE's Chief Executive Officer Ir Dr Mohd Shahreen Zainooreen Madros in a press conference said that Malaysian companies, particularly in the Halal sector, can go further globally when they coupled their offerings with the latest technology in the world.

"Malaysia is rich in its biodiversity, resulting in a myriad of Halal products offered by local players to the world. With technology, Malaysian producers can greatly add value to their Halal products, which have already been known to have the highest level of integrity in cleanliness and quality. With scientific verification, the business impact to the companies will multiply," he mentioned.

Halal products in Malaysia are not limited to just food and beverages. The Government through its Ministries and Agencies like MATRADE are pushing for the development of high-value sectors such as medical, health and pharmaceuticals to be more prominent globally using Halal as a value proposition. Technology is another value proposition that must be explored by Malaysian SMEs to compete globally.

Halal can be incorporated into any businesses in the Halal industry's supply chain – from the sourcing of raw materials to packaging and logistics. This is the very principle of Halalan Toyibban, which simply means adopting Halal as a way of life. Technology, in this context, is a main pillar.

"MATRADE as Malaysia's trade promotion agency, would like to emphasise the importance for Malaysian companies to be more invested in technology because it is a catalyst for them to stay ahead of the game and this is the way forward for Malaysia as we strive to achieve a developed



nation status. There are various platforms for them to do Research and Development such as engagement with universities like Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) that has the resources and facility to assist Malaysian companies in the technology sphere,” Dr Mohd Shahreen said.

Also present at the press conference are Head of Halal Research at UPM’s Halal Products Research Institute Prof. Dr Mohd Nasir Desa and representatives from SME Instrument, an association under the EU Commission.

“UPM has been working closely with the Government is assisting local companies to incorporate high technology in the development of their Halal products,” Prof. Dr Mohd Nasir said.

SME Instrument is one of the participants of MIHAS 2017, placed under the Europe Pavilion. The companies – Avanticell Science Ltd (UK) and Uniq Bioresearch Ltd (Finland) – each shared their experiences in capitalising on technology to capture the Halal market.

According to Avanticell’s Chief Scientific Officer Mr Colin Wilde, Malaysia has a strength in Halal and is a gateway into ASEAN. “By participating in MIHAS, we have been able to meet producers from Malaysia who can be our business partners. Their products work well with our technology and can do well in Europe too. We believe that Halal products are best in quality and cleanliness and technology can further support these products to make them even better,” Wilde said.

For Uniq Bioresearch Ltd its representative, Ms Sari Akras mentioned that her brand too finds MIHAS as a perfect platform for them to work with Malaysian companies. “We are truly impressed to see a lot of products that could be exported to Europe using our technology. We are now discussing with a few parties to realise this plan,” she said.

During the press conference, a simple award ceremony was also held where Malaysia Book of Records awarded MIHAS as the largest Halal trade fair. The award was presented by Malaysia Book of Records’ Deputy General Manager Mr Mohd Alex Edward to Dr Mohd Shahreen, as MATRADE’s representative.

MIHAS will return next year at MIHAS 2018, which will take place from 4 to 7 April 2018 at MATRADE International Trade and Exhibition Centre in Kuala Lumpur. Over the past 13 years,



MIHAS has grown from a mere consumer event to the world's largest Halal trade fair. The event this year was officiated by the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Dato' Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi on 5 April 2017. The four-day exhibition is currently being held at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) until 8 April 2017 and features 580 exhibitors from 33 countries. For more details on the event, visit www.mih.com.my.

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About MATRADE

The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) was established on March 1, 1993 as the external trade promotion arm of Malaysia's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). Its functions are:

- To promote, assist and develop Malaysia's external trade with particular emphasis on the export of manufactured and semi-manufactured products and services;
- To formulate and implement export marketing strategies and trade promotion activities to promote Malaysia's export;
- To undertake commercial intelligence and market research and create a comprehensive database of information for the improvement and development of Malaysia's trade;
- To organise training programmes to improve the international marketing skills of Malaysian exporters;
- To enhance and protect Malaysia's international trade investment abroad; and



- To promote, facilitate and assist in the services areas related to trade.