

Ministries hope for 50-50 participation

THE Ministries of Defence and Transport aim to increase the participation of the commercial sector in the next Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) exhibition.

According to the plan, the ministries which started to jointly host the exhibition this year – want to see a balance between the number of military and commercial exhibitors.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said this year's Lima sees a total of 555 exhibition participants, of which 240 were from the corporate side.

We have tried to close the gap between the military and commercial sector participation in Lima, and now we are looking at a 65-35 split. "By next Lima, we are hoping that it would be 50-50 participation between both the aviation and maritime side... [this] is an element that we are working on very hard," he said yesterday.

Hishammuddin said this to reporters in a joint press conference with Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai after a hi-tea with the media on board the Royal Malaysian Navy's (RMN) KD Jebat in Porto Malai, here yesterday.

He said this year's Lima (Lima 2017) saw an increase in the participation of exhibitors from 512 in 2015, to 555. This subsequently led to an increase in occupied exhibition spaces in both the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre (MIEC) for aerospace, and Resorts World Langkawi for the maritime segment by 15,000 sq m to a total of 119,209.

Hishammuddin said they expect the exhibition this year would bring in 180,000 trade and public visitors from around the world. "This Lima is historic as it will be the biggest in 26 years with a dramatic increase in total gross space occupied for the exhibition.

"It will see increases in not only the number of exhibitors, but also the a number of assets on display," he said. Hishammuddin said Lima 2017, which begins today and runs until Saturday, would also be the first to see an array of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) on display.

They include the United States Air Force's MQ-1 Predator, the US Navy MQ-8 Fire Scout, Thales Fulmar Mini UAV, Saab AUV 62AT and Ukraine's TBN UAV. Among the highlights of the exhibition, Hishammuddin added, are the Chiefs of Navy Roundtable Talk, which would bring together 12 navy chiefs and 24 representatives, and the Air Chiefs Conference".

He said the exhibition would also receive important visitors such as ministers from all over the world, including from the US, the UK, Turkey, Qatar, Australia and Southeast Asian nations.

Meanwhile, Liow said the Transport Ministry's highlights for Lima 2017 are the aviation summit and the Asia Pacific Maritime Safety Forum. "For the Transport Ministry, our

highlight is the aviation summit where we focus on our green environment, and how to ensure sustainable development in the aviation sector.

'As we know, aviation is a growing sector, but we are also concerned about the environment - how are we going to reduce carbon emissions - and definitely, this summit will have a lot of impact on our decisions to reduce carbon emissions in the aviation sector,' Liow said the maritime safety forum would see focus given on how to ensure safety in the Straits of Malacca, and how to ensure Malaysia's maritime industry will continue to have sustainable growth.

He said, by working closely with the Defence Ministry, the Transport Ministry believes it would enhance the commercial impact of Lima. "Like what was said by (Hishammuddin) just now, for economic development, we need the participation of the commercial sector.

And I am proud to say that this Lima sees a greater balance between the defence and commercial sectors [than before]." Hishammuddin and Liow were accompanied by Defence Ministry secretary general Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Mohamad Radzi and Armed Forces chief General Tan Sri Raja Mohamed Affandi Raja Mohamed Noor.

Also present were RMN chief Admirat Tan Sri Ahmad Kamarulzaman Ahmad Badaruddin, Royal Malaysian Air Force chief General Datuk Seri Affendi Buang and Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency director general Admiral Datuk Seri Puzi Kahar.