

Liow: Balance between growth and security a must

SEPANG: A balance is needed in allowing the airline industry to grow while ensuring passengers enjoy convenience and security.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, who spoke at the third International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) - World Customs Organisation (WCO) conference, urged all sectors to work closely to combat security threats arising from Islamic State militants and other terrorist groups.

However, he warned that rules and regulations should be in place for the industry to grow and progress while ensuring convenience and safety to passengers.

“If it (the industry) is over-regulated, it would become costly. But if it is under-regulated, then we have problems with security and safety,” he said here yesterday.

Echoing Liow’s sentiments was ICAO council president Dr Oluminuyiwa Benard Aliu who said the aviation industry should strike a balance between security and facilitation.

In his keynote address during the conference on enhancing air cargo security and facilitation, Dr Aliu pointed out that the discovery of packages containing explosives on board two separate cargo aircraft in 2010 had caused “severe delays, disruption and financial losses” to the industry.

“We must strive to do everything we can to prevent this from happening again,” he said. The three-day conference, attended by experts and industry leaders from both aviation and Customs, was held to find the best practices and provisions to strengthen air cargo security.

During its first panel discussion, it was agreed that better technology was needed to enhance air cargo security to face current international aviation trade challenges.

ICAO secretary-general Dr Fang Liu said that it was essential to constantly monitor mechanisms used in making sure that goods were transported securely and efficiently.

Global Express Association (GEA) director general Carlos Grau Tanner urged stakeholders to work together to enhance cargo screening technology. “Current screening technologies are generally made to scan baggage.

Better algorithms are needed to develop screening technology in high volumes,” he said. Admitting that it was an uphill task between balancing security and facilitation, Tanner said priority should be given to securing and facilitating the goods transported.

World Customs Organisation (WCO) secretary-general Dr Kunia Mikuriya said enhancing air cargo security was among the current international aviation trade challenges.

Malaysia was first elected to the ICAO council in 2007 and the Government would submit its candidacy to the council once more at the 39th session of the ICAO Assembly in September.

Liow, representing the Malaysian Government, contributed US\$100,000 (RM407,000) to ICAO’s Africa-Indian Ocean Safety Fund and a similar amount to the ICAO Aviation Safety and Security fund.

Some 300 participants from across the world attended the function. They will also make visits to major courier companies here.

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