



Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Bhd president Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah (second from right) and International Co-operative Alliance president Monique F. Leroux (fourth from right) during the closing plenary of the global conference recently.

Angkasa promotes palm oil to ICA

SARAH RAHIM
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE Global Conference and General Assembly of the International Co-Operative Alliance 2017 (ICAKL 2017) has been a platform to enlighten its cooperative members of its future direction in line with the current economic trends as well as efforts by Malaysia to help boost its economy through cooperatives.

Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Bhd (Angkasa) president Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah said on the second day of the event, a session to introduce oil palm to the international community was organised for representatives of the 98 participating countries.

"We are providing a platform to explain further about the activity of growing the crops, including to countries that do not plant it as a main commodity," he said.

He said the effort was supported by the Plantation Industries and Commodities Ministry.

"I would like to express my gratitude to Minister Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong for his support," he said, adding that Malaysian Palm Oil Council and Malaysian Palm Oil Board representatives also participated in the session.

He said the session was important to address the issue regarding palm oil products and the negative perception of the usage of its cooking oil, especially

among Europeans.

"A clarification was given about the crop, the way it is grown, the benefits of palm oil products and also its importance to our cooperative members," he said.

Fattah said the issue needed to be addressed because there were more than 500,000 cooperative members who were involved in the planting of oil palm.

He said about half of the harvest in Malaysia was grown by smallholders.

"Among them are those who live in Felcra and Felda schemes and in rural areas. If the palm oil product market is limited, this will impact our economy and their livelihood," he said.

Fattah said a campaign against any product was against the concept and spirit of the cooperative movement, which was to help each other.

"One of the spirit of cooperatives is to help each other or work together with other cooperatives," he said.

Fattah said countries that were not selling the product should not promote a negative image of palm oil.

He was speaking to reporters at a Malaysia Truly Asia session during the event, which was held to allow international delegates to enjoy local fruits as well as local cultures and customs.

They had the opportunity to sample 10 local fruits and be entertained with traditional dances and a demonstration to make crafts such as labu sayong, batik and other accessories.

Fattah said on the second day, there was also a plenary session by Dr Linda Yueh, a fellow in economics at Oxford University.

"She spoke about the players who will be the focus in the cooperative sector, so we would take note so we will not be left behind," he said.

"The response from the public was overwhelming. She also touched on the role of the United States and China in the future economy and their impact as Malaysia is also getting a lot of investment from China."

Fattah said Yueh gave clear explanations and also opened the mind of cooperative members so they could begin to plan the right strategy suitable to the economic situation of the future.

Besides the plenary session, there were several other workshops where participants presented papers.

"Examples include the role of cooperatives in helping refugees, and the role of cooperatives in a country with a lot of foreign labour, among others," he said.

He said Angkasa also took the opportunity to showcase its strength by organising the Malaysian Carnival of Cooperatives' Products and Services 2017.

"With greater networking, we can export our products to other countries and we can also import the products from the cooperatives at those countries."

ICAKL 2017, themed "Cooperative: Putting people at the centre of development" is being hosted for the first time in Malaysia, and more than 1,000 representatives from 98 countries are participating.

Carnival to help cooperatives grow

THE Malaysian Carnival of Cooperatives' Products and Services (Maccops) is gearing towards becoming a global brand by networking with players in cooperative movements worldwide to bring Malaysian products to the international market.

Maccops 2017, organised for the third time by Angkasa, an apex body for Malaysia's cooperative movement, had for the first time included international participants in the carnival this year.

The five-day carnival, which started on Wednesday, features 162 exhibitors, including 20 international cooperatives from China, Fiji, Indonesia, India and Iran.

The carnival was officiated by International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) president Monique F. Leroux at the Sunway Pyramid Convention Centre in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, on Wednesday.

Present were Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Bhd (Angkasa) president Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah and vice-president Datuk Kamarudin Ismail.

Leroux said when the exhibition was combined with the ICA Global Conference and General Assembly, it will bring about action regarding cooperation and creation of jobs.

"The exhibition complemented the programme and its key objectives. This is one of the best exhibitions. There are vibrant entrepreneurship activities, commitment on the cooperatives as well as the participation of young people," she said during a press conference.

As Malaysia's cooperatives movement also involved cooperatives at schools, Leroux was impressed as she said education was one of the ways to address inequality.

"At the exhibition, we can see that members of ICA in Malaysia and participants of other countries have started

to discuss on the next step after the conference and the exhibition. I was talking to representatives from India and China, and they talked about an e-commerce platform to facilitate trade between countries," she said.

"I am sure after the exhibition there will be some initiatives that will follow," she said.

Leroux also commended the effort by Angkasa in helping cooperatives grow and get their products ready for the international market.

"I would like to have the same thing in Canada. Although we are very organised with our cooperative movement in Canada, we do not have an organisation like Angkasa that gives the support to small cooperatives," she said, adding that it was a great way for all cooperatives to learn from the Malaysian example.

Meanwhile, Fattah said Angkasa would discuss on the participation of Maccops at every ICA Global Conference and General Assembly as it would go on a worldwide tour across the region.

"Most importantly, we have pioneered the effort here. We were pleased to receive a positive endorsement from Leroux," he said.

This year, Angkasa estimates RM200 million (USD\$50 million) of future business transactions to come from this exhibition.

Among the products and services showcased by local cooperatives included food and beverages, healthcare, property, agriculture, and services from the tourism, finance as well as information technology sectors.

Maccops is open to the public from 10am to 10pm until Nov 19. Visitors who register for the lucky draw are eligible to win laptops, mobile phones and a motorcycle, with a grand prize of a Proton Iriz.



Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia (Angkasa) vice-president Datuk Kamarudin Ismail



Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Bhd president Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah sampling local fruits with guests at the Malaysia Truly Asia session recently.