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Malaysian International Furniture Fair 2012 To Be Another Record Year

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 10 (Bernama) -- MIFF Sdn Bhd believes the Malaysian International Furniture Fair 2012 (MIFF 2012) will be another record year, with sales to equal or exceed last year's US\$778 million.

Managing Director Datuk Dr Tan Chin Huat said the five-day exhibition from March 6 at the Putra World Trade Centre and Matrade Exhibition and Convention Centre is expected to woo some 6,000 foreign buyers from 140 countries.

With 75,000 square metres exhibition space, the fair will attract about 500 furniture manufacturers and exporters from Malaysia, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Australia and the United States.

The fair will showcase a wide range of furniture, furniture accessories, fittings and hardwares.

MIFF 2012 has been endorsed by various ministries and government agencies like the International Trade and Industry Ministry, Plantation Industries and Commodities Ministry and Malaysian Timber Industry Board.

"Despite the economic crisis in Europe, which has not recovered there's growing demand and opportunities from the Middle East and new markets in South America," he told BERNAMA.

In the current softer global economic climate, Dr Tan said there was a need to focus on research and development to produce products with competitive edge.

While the United States has been traditionally a major market for Malaysian furniture, there was now less dependency on the US market, he said.

"India is also another growing market for furniture," he said.

Dr Tan said Malaysian manufacturers have the capacity to be world leading suppliers of quality furniture products.

"However, local manufacturers are not given due exposures, promotions and incentives," he said.

In this respect, Dr Tan said the MIFF, a leading trade fair in the Asia-Pacific region over the past 18 years, was an ideal platform for manufacturers to gain recognition in the international market.

"We are also known now as the top 10 exhibitions worldwide," he said.

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The furniture industry was also facing challenging times due to labour supply issues and foreign labour policy changes, he added.

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EURO Holdings Bhd executive director Garry H.T.Teh said buyers were more choosy in the current economic environment.

He said it was important the Malaysian furniture brand does not focus on general products but on products with exclusive value in the foreign market.

"What you want to see as a Malaysian brand?. As an industry player, the focus is not there, and the focus is more on a general perspective," he said.

Teh said green-initiative products were more expensive as they fetched higher price due to the current trend and demand in the market.

EURO Holdings is one of the exhibitors for MIFF 2012.

Hin Lim Furniture Manufacturer Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Thomas Lim said contemporary designs would drive demand especially for discerning buyers in the foreign market.

"My company's furniture exports to Chile, Thailand and Africa have been increasing since last year," he said.

This showed Malaysian-made furniture has potential to penetrate into large overseas markets.

Lim, however, said banks were not supportive to furniture companies keen to expand their businesses.

"They are hesitant to disburse loans owing to the negative perception on the domestic furniture industry," he said.

Penang-based Hin Lim Furniture is also one of the exhibitors for this year.

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