

Headline	Call for concerted effort by ASEAN to develop halal industry		
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Call for concerted effort by ASEAN to develop halal industry

BANGKOK: A halal science centre in Thailand has called for a concerted effort by ASEAN countries to develop a regional halal industry, using a globally-accepted unified logo and certificate.

The Halal Science Centre of Chulalongkorn University (HSC-CU) felt that a unified logo and certificate would be accepted by all organisations and countries and enable Asean to tap into the emerging halal markets.

Its Assistant Director, Sulida Wangchi, said each of the ASEAN member countries now had its own logo and certification which were not universally accepted.

She anticipated tremendous growth in the halal industry following increasing demand for halal food and other consumer products, but lamented that the market was currently dominated by countries such as Brazil, China and the United States.

"Therefore, it is better for ASEAN members to work together using a unified halal logo and certificate which will be accepted by all organisations so that we can compete with them and tap into the emerging halal markets," she told a group of Malaysian journalists who visited the Halal Science Centre of the university,

here.

The visit was part of a media familiarisation trip to Thailand hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

Today, there is an estimated population of 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide and the global demand for halal products for both the food and non-food sectors is estimated at US\$2.3 trillion (RM7.05 trillion).

Sulida said ASEAN countries with Muslim populations, such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, should take the lead to capitalise on the potential complementarities and collaborate to explore the huge potential halal market.

"The halal market is the future for ASEAN, especially after the ASEAN Economic Community comes into effect in 2015. There are many areas that ASEAN countries can look into to tap the halal market, especially among member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

"Therefore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia should be at the centre of ASEAN in the halal industry and we must strengthen our cooperation and use our expertise to ensure that halal products from ASEAN pass the international standards, right from the

raw material up to the store shelf," she said.

Sulida said ASEAN countries must work closely as halal products from ASEAN could face trade barriers and other policy challenges outside the region because of countries protecting their home-grown products.

She also said that Thailand hoped to work closely with Malaysia to develop the halal food industry in the region. The HSC-CU would sign two memorandums of understanding (MOU) with Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) on science and technology to support the halal industry, at the Halal Science, Industry and Business International Conference (HASIB) 2012 in Hat Yai from 13 to 15 Oct, she said.

The conference was being held in conjunction with the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle Halal Expo 2012, and the topics to be discussed include Halal ICT and Innovation, Seamless Potential of the Halal Industry and Business in the Halal Economy.

Sulida welcomed Malaysian halal industry players to participate in the HASIB 2012. - Bernama

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AN Assistant Director of *Halal* Science Centre of Chulalongkorn University (HSC-CU) Sulida Wangchi.



A laboratory assistant from the *Halal* Science Centre of Chulalongkorn University conducting lab test on samples recently.
PHOTOS: BERNAMA