Huawei Reveals 'Fastest Smartphone In The World'

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BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Huawei, a Chinese company that recently became the world's third-largest maker of smartphones, calls its new flagship product "the fastest smartphone in the world" and wants to use it to expand global awareness of its brand.

Parts of the presentation of the phone at a press conference Sunday in Barcelona, Spain, suggest that the company has some way to go in polishing its pitch for a global audience.

Richard Yu, head of Huawei's consumer business group said the new phone can be programmed to display more than 100 different "themes," or looks. This is important because "ladies like flowers, colorful things," Yu said.

Yu also said Huawei is learning from Apple how to make Google's Android software easier to use, a lawsuit-friendly utterance considering that Apple is on a global campaign to sue makers of Android phones for copying from the iPhone.

The new phone, the Ascend P2, will have a 4.7 inch screen. Yu said it will be available in the April to June time frame for about $525 without a contract. It's the "fastest" because it supports faster download speeds than other phones. However, today's wireless networks aren't equipped to supply those speeds.

Huawei Technologies Ltd. was the world's third largest seller of smartphones, after Samsung and Apple, in the fourth quarter of last year, according to research firm IDC. That's despite selling very few phones in the U.S., where the big phone companies mostly ignore it. It has a much better position in Europe, where cellphone companies have embraced its network equipment, and France's Orange is committed to selling the phone.

In the U.S., a congressional panel recommended in October that phone carriers avoid doing business with Huawei or its smaller Chinese rival, ZTE Corp., for fear that its network equipment could contain "back doors" that enable access to communications from outside. The Chinese government rejected the report as false and an effort to block Chinese companies from the U.S. market.

Meanwhile, a report by a private U.S. cybersecurity firm concluded recently that a special unit of China's military is responsible for sustained cyberespionage against U.S. companies and government agencies. China has denied involvement in the attacks in which massive amounts of data and corporate trade secrets, likely worth hundreds of millions of dollars, were stolen.

"It has not been an easy journey for us," Huawei's global brand director, Amy Lou, said Sunday of the company's quest to become globally recognized and trusted. She called the company "a great consumer brand in the making."

The world's largest cellphone trade show, Mobile World Congress, opens Monday in Barcelona.

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