

03 AUG 1996

NEW APPROACHES NEEDED TO ENSURE SUCCESS OF MSC

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- A panel discussion on "Investment Guidelines for the MSC Project," today decided that new approaches and incentives were needed to ensure the success of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) Chairman Datuk Dr new technologies.

"Hence, we need to take into account the ever changing technological environment," he said in his opening remark at the third day of the Multimedia Asia 96 conference cum exhibition which began on Aug 1.

Zainal Abidin, who chaired the subject on investment guidelines, said the concept of MSC involved many elements including ensuring adequate infrastructure, sufficient skilled manpower for hardware and software development and housing needs.

The RM5 billion MSC project, unveiled by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Thursday, aimed to make Malaysia the first country to bring together all elements needed to create an environment crafted especially to meet the needs of leading companies in the Information Age.

The MSC covers a 15km by 50 km area, encompassing the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Putrajaya, KL International Airport at Sepang and IT City.

Ministry of International Trade and Industry's (MITI) Industrial Policy director Dr K.J. John said the MSC represented the third wave of developmental phase Malaysia is undergoing.

The first wave was when Malaysia was agriculture driven, and the second wave was manufacturing driven with the establishment of Free Trade Zones in the country.

"The third wave represents knowledge-based in the new emerging borderless world. We have to unlearn the old system and learn the new system of IT technology," he said.

John said Malaysia must move away from assembly-line production and the new Industrial Master Plan's (IMP) focus is information driven in software and hardware technology and "we think the MSC fits exactly into our new IMP," he said.

MIDA's director-general Datuk Zainon Aishah Ahmad said the existing investment guidelines were not sufficient to promote the MSC, since these guidelines were meant for the manufacturing sector.

"We need new guidelines to support the MSC. Before, it was the size of the investment but now it is to attract knowledge-based and creative industries," she said.

Microsoft (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd director John Lauer said, Malaysia has to do more to develop the required manpower needs of the MSC.

"Malaysia is not doing enough compared to other regions. In short term, the problem can be addressed by bringing in foreign skilled manpower," he said.

Lauer said limitations should not stop Malaysia in launching the MSC. "In my business the best policy to adopt is: ready, fire and aim," he said.

Microsoft selected Malaysia as its regional headquarters because of its leaders (Malaysian) with a clear vision, liberal policy to allow entry of foreign workers, a skilled workforce with command of English and strategic location of the country, close to Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia and relatively low operation costs. -- BERNAMA

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