

19 DEC 1996

Mahathir-Agenda

THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY FOR MALAYSIA'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENDA

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's Information Technology (IT) Agenda will have a three-pronged strategy with a clear mission of building a knowledge society, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said the strategies are to build and developed the appropriate physical infrastructure and infostructure, the creation and development of enrichment systems or IT-based applications that are demand driven, and emphasis on human development effort.

"Vision 2020 calls for the building of a developed nation in our own mould. The mission of the IT Agenda must therefore be to nurture a knowledge society premised on our own history, tradition, culture and development experiences.

"This knowledge society must also become a civil society," he said when opening the second National Conference on Information Technology, Infotech Malaysia '96, at the Putra World Trade Centre today.

He said the government, through the National Information Technology Council (NITC), has assumed the role of providing the necessary leadership for the development of IT in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said the establishment of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) was a direct, clear and strategic outcome of the NITC deliberations to build and develop the appropriate physical infrastructure and infostructure.

"The MSC will begin with the development of eight multimedia applications to propel Malaysia into the information age," he said.

He said the MSC's eight flagship multimedia applications would also provide the opportunity for both participation and learning in line with the second strategy of the IT Agenda to create and developed enrichment systems or IT-based applications that are demand driven.

"We are negotiating for the support and assistance of some of the best companies in the world to share their technology and know-how with us," he said.

He said the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) would ensure that the companies would cooperate with locals to create smart partnerships on the development of new applications.

To achieve the third strategy of the IT Agenda, the Prime Minister said both individuals and groups have to acculturate themselves to deal with intelligent or smart systems while still remaining smarter than the systems or applications that they help create.

He said the human development effort would involve all educational and training systems, whether formal or informal, from the primary to the tertiary and continuing education systems.

On the creation of a civil society which would be the ultimate vision of the IT Agenda, Dr Mahathir said it must be a society where the wise rule and the people actively participate in determining their destiny.

He said the ownership of knowledge might be less privatised and personalised but would become trusteeships of civil property.

"This is our notion of a genuinely caring society, one which is duty-bound to take care of the interests of everyone in the society," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the success of all these new initiatives was dependent on people being ready to adapt to and adopt changes.

He said knowledge workers could drive the change process especially in

creating demand-driven content and developing the applications.

"The education and acculturation process must finally lead to complete transformation of both society and individuals," he said, adding that the IT Agenda is not merely a destination but a journey that Malaysians need to travel together.

The Prime Minister reminded Malaysians that the MSC was the country's bold new initiative to turn IT ripples into waves of change.

However, it would only take place if the nation as a whole commits itself to becoming a knowledge society, he said. -- BERNAMA

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