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Mohamed-Panel

INFO MINISTRY TO SET UP BROADCASTING ADVISORY PANEL

By: Azman Hashim

WELLINGTON, July 10 (Bernama) -- A Broadcasting Advisory Panel is to be set up by year-end to draw up specific standards to be complied with by local broadcasting stations, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said today.

He said the panel would ensure implementation of the Broadcasting Act was in tandem with the government's objective to create an informed society and at the same time nurture the noble values when Malaysia attained developed country status in the year 2020.

"The panel is not a controlling body. It will advise the Information Minister on the contents of programmes to be aired to help the government face the challenges of Vision 2020," he told Bernama before leaving for home after a five-day working visit to New Zealand.

Before ending his visit, Mohamed called on New Zealand's Minister for Communications Maurice Williamson and two parliamentarians Jonathan Hunt and Marion Hobbs, who are spokespersons for opposition parties on broadcasting and communication.

Hunt is also chairman of New Zealand's Broadcasting Standard Authority which monitors contents of programmes aired by broadcasting stations to ensure New Zealanders were not fed with unhealthy programmes which would have adverse effects on their culture and lifestyle.

Mohamed said the panel would be headed by someone, who is experienced in the field of broadcasting, while its members comprise representatives from institutions of higher learning, the media, consumer movements, cultural bodies and relevant organisations.

He said his ministry would study the experiences of other countries before stipulating the appropriate broadcasting standards.

On his meeting with Williamson, Mohamed said the minister hailed Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project as a brilliant move because multimedia is a business of the future.

He said Williamson requested Malaysia to enlighten New Zealand companies on the opportunities available within the MSC to enable them to participate.

Mohamed said he told Williamson that Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie will come to New Zealand soon to brief them on MSC.

He also said Malaysia and New Zealand had agreed to implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on broadcasting and information signed during Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit last year.

He said RTM would send its officers to New Zealand for training in broadcasting particularly on the use of graphic computers, exchange of television programmes and buying programmes suited for Malaysians.

While here, Mohamed visited the fully-automated More FM radio station, held discussions with officials of Saturn Communications which operates cable and pay TV as well as Avalon Studios, a subsidiary of Television New Zealand Limited.

He said he was attracted to the fully-automated system used by radio stations in New Zealand and planned to explore the possibility of emulating the system in Malaysia. -- BERNAMA

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