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PM-IAP

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS ENTHUSIASTIC WITH MSC CONCEPT

By: K.C. Leong

PALO ALTO (California), Jan 17 (Bernama) -- The first meeting of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) for Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor was held here on Thursday with members of the panel expressing enthusiasm over the concept.

They voiced their willingness to help make the MSC a success.

The 30-member panel, including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and Multimedia Development Corporation executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah, included the luminaries of the information technology industry.

Dr Mahathir told a news conference after the six-and-a-half hour meeting held at Stanford University that panel members had also agreed to hold their next meeting in January next year in Kuala Lumpur.

Of the 28 international members of the IAP, six were unable to attend because of other commitments.

They were Bill Gates (Microsoft), Louis Gerstner (IBM), Gilbert Amelio (Apple), Dr Heinrich von Pierer (Siemens Corp), Tadashi Sekizawa (Fujitsu) and futurologist Alvin Toffler.

The other panel members present at the meeting were consultant Kenichi Ohmae, Lester Alberthal (EDS), Ambassador Diana Lady Dougan, Larry Ellison (Oracle), Fred Gluck (Bechtel), Nobuyuki Idei (Sony), Bon Moo Koo (Lucky-Goldstar), Robert Madge (Madge Networks), Jim Manzi (Nets Inc), Scott McNealy (Sun Microsystems), Prof William Miller (Stanford Graduate School of Business);

Noboru Miyawaki (NTT), Philip Odeen (BDM International), Eckhard Pfeiffer (Compaq), Lewis Platt (Hewlett-Packard), Stan Shih (Acer), Masayoshi Son (Softbank), Dean Michael Spence (Dean Graduate School of Business, Stanford), Gary Tooker (Motorola), Lynton Ronald Wilson (BCE), James Barksdale (Netscape) and Robert R. Bishop (Silicon).

The Prime Minister said other meetings might also be convened to address issues related to more specific matters concerning the implementation of the MSC to be attended by lower-ranking executives of organisations of IAP members.

In the meantime, Dr Mahathir said, panel members could keep in touch with him via e-mail or schedule one-on-one meetings with him.

He said the panelists had offered useful advice and suggestions to make the MSC a success but had also raised a number of concerns such as a shortage of knowledge workers and how to market the products from the MSC in neighbouring countries.

He said these concerns had been noted and the necessary action would be taken where possible.

He was happy that a lot of ideas had been floated around the table including those concerning distance learning using computers and the Internet and the proposed smart schools application.

Dr Mahathir said although the meeting was of an advisory nature, some of the panelists indicated they might also invest in the MSC.

A number of the panelists told the news conference of their plans or interest in investing in the area.

Asked how the MSC would fare in the face of competition posed by similar initiatives in other countries, Ambassador Dougan said although many countries offered attractions such as tax holidays, the MSC brought together many incentives and ploughed new ground with its proposed

cyberlaws.

She said what set the MSC apart from other projects was the leadership and the level of commitment shown by Malaysia's leaders.

Asked whether the number of Americans on the panel was at odds with Malaysia's Look East policy, Dr Mahathir stressed that what was often missed in reporting about the policy was that he had said Malaysia would never stop looking West.

He said there had been concerns raised about whether the new way of life as envisaged under the MSC would be in conflict with conservative elements, such as those in Kelantan.

However, he felt that this would not pose a problem as the MSC had been raised for some time now and there had been no negative response. "Besides, they have bigger problems on their hands like how to run the state government," he said. -- BERNAMA

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