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MSC will help in development

Calvin Goh in San Francisco

THE Multimedia Super Corridor is a pilot project to harmonise Malaysia with the global forces shaping the information age, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The country does not see multimedia merely as a new type of information technology but rather as a tool to both create a knowledge-based society and harvest its potential economic, social and cultural rewards, he added.

The Prime Minister was speaking at a meeting with Silicon Valley chief executive officers of high technology companies at the Westin Hotel in Santa Clara, about an hour's drive from here.

About 30 of them were present, including Dr Leonard Y. Liu, the chairman, president and CEO of Walker Interactive Systems (a company which provides high-end financial application systems), Frank Lin, chairman and CEO of Trident Microsystems (a leader in the graphic chip sets industry), Tim Koogle of Yahoo (a leading Internet search engine company), John Morgridge, chairman of Cisco Systems (an industry leader in networking), and George Scalise, executive vice-president of Apple Computer Inc.

Malaysia is using the MSC to create a perfect environment for companies wanting to create, distribute and employ multimedia products and services.

"We realise we have much to learn from Silicon Valley which is more advanced than Malaysia," Dr Mahathir said. "But precisely because you are so developed, there are very important things we can do that you cannot."

He said the role of the Government would be to remove the obstacles created by policies that were successful in the industrial age but must be changed to unleash the full potential of the information age.

"We offer the Multimedia Super Corridor as a gift to the world to help all of us successfully meet the challenges of the 21st century.

"None of us can continue to succeed in this increasingly borderless world by ourselves, and we invite those of you who share our vision to be our partners in exploring this exciting new frontiers," he said.

Phase one of the MSC involves making it a success by learning from Malaysia's partners and the experience it gains.

Phase two will link in other islands of excellence within Malaysia and around the world, and phase three involves making all of Malaysia a MSC.

"I expect we will be in the final phase by 2020 as we become a developed nation," he said.

The MSC will be managed and marketed by the Multimedia Development Corporation, whose mission is to create the best environment for private sector companies to pursue multimedia activities.

Dr Mahathir said the MDC would be opening 10 offices around the world, including in Silicon Valley, over the next two years so that it could be close to the companies which would be its clients.

He said Malaysia was highly committed to making the MSC a success and it had a track record of meeting its commitments.

The Malaysian Government sees multimedia as the strategic sector to achieve Vision 2020 and the MSC is at the leading edge of this key sector, he said.

"Consequently, we simply cannot and will not allow the MSC to fail."

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