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Pact to boost MDC ties with technology parks

Kamarul Yunus in Budapest (Hungary)

BUDAPEST (Hungary), Mon: The Multimedia Development Corp (MDC) is set to forge links with other technology parks in Asia, Europe and the US following its signing of a memorandum of understanding with Infopark RT of Budapest here today.

Its executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah said the understanding with Infopark will pave the way for linkages between the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and other similar technology-based hubs in Europe, as well as tap Hungary's rich human resource in information technology (IT).

"As Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said ... the success of the MSC depends on our ability to interact with similar technology hubs in Europe, Asia and the US.

"It will also create a window for us towards developing research and development," he told Malaysian journalists before the signing of the MOU. Dr Mahathir, who arrived here for a two-day working visit to Hungary, witnessed the signing with his Hungarian counterpart Gyula Horn.

Othman signed the MOU on behalf of MDC, while Infopark was represented by its director Imre Grof.

Othman said the setting up of such IT hubs in other countries should not be regarded as a threat to MSC but viewed as possibilities of forging strategic alliances.

"It is not a threat to MSC. We hope in the next couple of years, we will be able to link with other hubs. This is a platform," he added.

Under the terms and conditions of the MOU with Infopark, both parties agree to establish a platform to cooperate through the exchange of information, identification of business opportunities and projects for both developments, as well as fostering closer ties between both organisations through educational linkages and exchange programmes.

MDC is a corporation set up to oversee the implementation, promote and manage the MSC, a 15km by 50km zone stretching south from Kuala Lumpur, with the aim at turning Malaysia into a global IT hub.

Infopark, meanwhile, is the organisation responsible for overseeing the development of Infopark, the first technology park dedicated to IT based development and innovation in Hungary.

Mooted by the Hungarians themselves, Othman said both countries will benefit from the MOU in terms of exchange in educational programmes and expertise. For example, he said Hungary can also benefit from the link because this will provide them opportunities to interact with other technology hubs in Asia.

"This will also enable them to promote their Infopark to the multinational companies which are participating in the MSC," he said, adding Hungary welcomes any move by Malaysian entrepreneurs to invest in its technology park.

Covering a 14ha site, the Infopark is located and jointly developed by Budapest Technology Institute and Budapest University Technology or known as Eotvas Lorand University.

Besides exchange of information, Othman said Malaysia can also benefit in terms of tapping the rich human resource of the Hungarians.

"With a population of 10.2 million, Hungary is still considered small. But they have achieved remarkable success, having produced eight Nobel prize winners. They were also able to produce 1,000 engineers within two

months.

"... they also claimed to have been able to produce the most advanced finger-printing identification for the development of multi-purpose cards," he added.

Othman also said the Hungarians are also impressed with Malaysia's plan to develop MSC, which they described as "unique" and a well planned IT development.

"They want to gauge the success of our MSC and use this as a model for their own programme. I think they want to build bridges with an exciting partner known globally in terms of economic growth," he added.

On the progress of MSC, Othman said it is moving rapidly and smoothly, in terms of promotion, marketing and implementation of cyber laws.

"There are more than 1,000 companies interested to participate in the MSC, and more European companies have shown their intention to participate in the corridor," he added.

He also said the ground-breaking of the Multimedia University in Cyberjaya is expected to commence in September, while Dr Mahathir is also expected to promote the MSC in the East Coast of the US, including in New York and Boston in November.

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