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Panel comprises IT's who's who (HL)

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LOS Angeles, Tues: The composition of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) for Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) reads like a who's who list of the international information technology (IT) industry and related fields.

The IAP, which is chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, will hold its inaugural meeting at the Stanford University on Thursday. Also in the panel, is Malaysia's Multimedia Development Corp (MDC) executive chairman, Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah. (See table)

Microsoft's Bill Gates, IBM's Louis Gerstner, Fujitsu's Tadashi Sekizawa, Siemens' Heinrich von Pierer and Toffler & Associates' Alvin Toffler will however not attend Thursday's meeting at Stanford University in San Francisco.

Briefing newsmen today, MDC chief operating officer, Dr Mohamed Arif Nun, said in principle the IAP would like to meet annually, although this has not been finalised.

He said the next meeting would be held in Malaysia, and subsequently in other nations.

On why there are no Malaysian corporate representatives on the panel, he said the initial period of the MSC project's implementation is expected to be very intense where Malaysia would concentrate on getting between 20 and 30 leading international IT companies into the corridor.

The companies represented in the IAP are all renowned names and leaders of the multimedia industry in North America, Europe, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea.

EDS Corp, for example, is a systems integration and management world leader with a revenue of US\$12.4 billion (US\$1 = RM2.47) in 1995.

Netscape Communications Corp is a leading provider of open client server and integrated applications software that supports information exchange and commercial transactions over the Internet.

Apple, Sony and Microsoft require no introduction, being household names, while Oracle is one of the world's leading vendors and developers of database management systems software.

Sun Microsystems, meanwhile, employs some 15,600 people and generated a revenue of US\$5.9 billion in 1995. It is the foremost company in the provision of enterprise-wide network computing solutions and Internet technologies.

NTT is Japan's largest supplier of telecommunications services and is second only to AT&T of US in the world.

Hewlett Packard is an international manufacturer of measurement and computation products and systems used in industries, business, engineering, medicine and education. Headquartered in Palo Alto, the company reported a net revenue of US\$38 billion last year.

Taiwan's Acer Group is a leading personal computers manufacturer in Asia and Latin America and also a top-10 brand in the world.

Describing the probable scenario at the meeting, Arif said Malaysia would treat the MSC as a concept to be presented to the international companies.

"We will do plenty of listening," he said, adding that the panelists are expected to provide their inputs as to what is required to make the project a success.

In Kuala Lumpur, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Abu

Hassan Omar said the Government plans to update and further tighten provisions of the existing Copyright Act 1987 to make it more specific with regards to the multimedia sector.

The proposed amendments will make the provisions clearer as well as bring them in line with the growing importance of the multimedia sector in the country, he said.

"They (the amendments) are necessary in view of the country's strong emphasis on information technology and multimedia," he told reporters after attending the ministry's monthly gathering.

Abu Hassan said with the introduction of cyber laws and the amendment of the Copyright Act, the interests of investors participating in MSC project will be further protected.

He noted that at present, matters related to multimedia are treated only generally under Section 8 of the Act which pertains to derivative works.

Derivative works refer to translations, adaptations, arrangements and other transformations of literary, musical or artistic works, which by reason of the selection and arrangement of their contents, constitute intellectual creations.

It is understood that the ministry wants the Act amended this year. Officials of the ministry are currently looking into the matter.