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IT EXPERTS TO DISCUSS MSC'S PROGRESS AT NEW CYBERJAYA COMPLEX

By: Jefri Mohd Rafiee

CYBERJAYA, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- For two days on Feb 12 and Feb 13, information technology (IT) experts and gurus as well as top industry leaders will meet in a newly-built resort here where a lush oil palm estate once stood.

Their discussions and recommendations in the high-powered meeting will be used to help map out strategies for further development of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), a top priority project for Malaysia's advancement in the world of IT.

The resort-cum-office complex has been purposely built at a cost of RM65 million on 11.2 hectares of former estate land, which is part of the 2,855 ha earmarked for the development of the Cyberjaya intelligent city.

The complex, which was built in just 90 days, is located west of Putrajaya, the federal government's new administrative centre.

The meeting of the IT experts is the second to be held under the auspices of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The inaugural meeting took place at Stanford in the United States early last year after the launch of the MSC.

The IAP, which comprises multimedia industry leaders and gurus, is to advise the government on the MSC's development.

Dr Muhammad Ghazie Ismail, the Multimedia Development Corporation Sdn Bhd's (MDC) director for client services, said at the time of the formation of the IAP, the MSC had just been launched and there were a few concerns expressed on its viability.

They included the question of expertise and competition with similar projects by other governments.

"This time around, the meeting would be more meaningful," he said confidently in a recent interview with Bernama.

"At that time, this thing (pointing to the transit office complex) was not here. It was just all oil palms. From last year, things moved very fast," he said of the development at Cyberjaya.

The resort-cum-office complex, which houses MDC's headquarters and the two-storey 48-room Cyberview Lodge, also has a high-speed telecommunication infrastructure for video conferencing. It even has a ballroom for up to 300 people and a swimming pool.

Although relative small in terms of scale and situated in a quite remote location since it would about 30 minutes by road from Kuala Lumpur, the complex will from now be an important meeting place in view of its proximity to Putrajaya, Cyberjaya and the new international airport at Sepang.

So far 15 IAP members have confirmed their attendance. They include Dr Kenichi Ohmae of Ohmae & Associates, Gary Tooker of Motorola Inc, Jun-Ichiro Miyazu of NTT, Dr Tadahiro Sekimoto of NEC, Jim Manzi of Nets Inc, Dr Lars Ramqvist of Ericsson and Professor William Miller of Stanford University.

Other panel members are sending their representatives. They include Dr John Gage who will come on behalf of Scott McNeally from Sun Microsystems, George Samenuk on behalf of Louis Gerstner Jr of IBM, Derek Williams on behalf of Larry Ellison of Oracle Corp and Axel Hass on behalf of Dr Heinrich von Pierer of Siemens Corp.

"They will all stay here (at the complex)," said Dr Muhammad Ghazie.

The first item on the agenda will be an update for panel members on the development of the MSC since they last met.

They will also be taken on a helicopter tour to get a bird's eyeview of the MSC, a designated 15 by 50 km multimedia development hub located between the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) and the new KL International Airport at Sepang.

Four companies have been shortlisted to brief panel members on their experiences operating as MSC companies and how they have benefited from the MSC.

To date a total of 103 companies have been granted with the MSC status, with 80 of them already operating and 23 in the process of setting up their operations.

"We want to convey to the IT members that the MSC is no longer just a concept, but a reality, that things are moving on the ground, that the companies are operating and some of them moving ahead of their own schedule," said Dr Muhammad Ghazie.

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They will also discuss global issues including the possibility of the setting up of a kind-of an International CyberCourt of Justice.

"Now you have Cyberlaws. The issue is what kind of mechanism is needed to enforce Cyberlaws," Dr Muhammad Ghazie said.

Also high on the agenda are issues of the enforcement of the Digital Signature Act, which was passed by Parliament last year, and the proposed Multimedia Convergence Act, which could possibly be tabled in Parliament this year.

The meeting will also discuss cross-border issues like electronic commerce, security encryption, the issues of common platform in smart card application, content development which include curriculum for universities and post-production film industry, and the societal effects of the internet which include the issues of censorship.

Dr Muhammad Ghazie said the issues to be raised at the second IAP meeting must be resolved if the MSC were to take off towards greater heights.

At the end of the meeting, the panel members would be asked whether "we are moving into the right direction in terms of human resource development, physical infrastructure, R&D (research and development) activities, venture capital and so on and so forth."

"They will then make their recommendations. That will form the basis in which we will move. Since the first IAP meeting, we now know with some degree of confidence that the issues would present itself for the long term," said Dr Muhammad Ghazie. -- BERNAMA

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