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Time for world to check on MSC's progress

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CREATING an environment that nurtures and enhances creativity is not difficult in Malaysia - our natural all-year round summer weather and the lush greenery already offers much of the basic ingredients.

So, to see the resort-like landscape and wooden chalets making up the main focal point of the Multimedia Super Corridor should not come as a surprise for it is meant to be a testbed where creative minds can run riot.

In fact, one can imagine being completely cut off from the hustle and bustle of urban life in Cyberjaya as it is a self-contained community.

And, even though the passage there is through lush greenery on roads flanked by rows of oil palms, the community there will have perhaps the best communication links to the rest of the world in the form of 10 Gigabits per second trunk lines.

Such is the strategic location of the MSC, which also houses its co-ordinating body, Multimedia Development Corporation Sdn Bhd.

This location will house the second meeting of the International Advisory Panel members over two days from Feb 12, and the attendees will be updated on progress achieved so far in the MSC.

The IAP advises MDC on what it should look out for when handling its task of being the one-stop agency developing the MSC.

So far, 15 of the International Advisory Panel members have confirmed their attendance, Multimedia Development Corporation Sdn Bhd executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah said.

Another 19 are unable to attend due to prior commitments but eight are sending other officers as replacements to the second IAP meeting - which will be chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The IAP membership has now expanded to 41, up from the 29 when the first IAP meeting was held on Jan 16, 1997 at Stanford University in California, US.

Othman said the increased membership was due to the need to include experts from various areas that are of relevance to the development of the MSC.

"Initially, we thought that members should come from only a specific industry. However, after the development of the industry, we realise that there are other personalities who can contribute to the MSC."

Among the new inclusions are consumer electronics giants like Lucky-Goldstar of South Korea and Ericsson of Sweden. And this is due to the MSC's focus on all research and tested results being widely commercialised.

With countless firms still flooding the MDC with applications for e-recognition of their projects, competition is expected to be stiff and it should see Malaysia becoming a more significant player in the next wave of consumer electronics.

To further crystallise in the minds of everyone present at the meetings, three MSC-status companies will be invited to do a presentation - a feel of what is taking place at ground level and that the MSC project has gone beyond the concept stage.

Othman also said that the current economic problems has had minimal impact on developments in the MSC. This is largely due to the MSC being a priority project and also most investments are in human resource.

Also, much of the resources that have gone into setting up Cyberjaya has

largely been local - with much of the building materials and finishings made up of local wood products.

The MSC project is envisioned to be the driving force of the nation's economy in the coming years with new products, technologies and services being created and offered.

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