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Mahathir-Mimos

GOVT PLEDGES CONTINUOUS SUPPORT FOR MIMOS BERHAD

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today pledged the government's continuous support for Mimos Berhad which he said plays a crucial role in developing cyber-businesses working on the frontier of the knowledge-economy.

Dr Mahathir said he looked forward to Mimos, the agency tasked with promoting the country's micro-electronics industry, acting as the catalyst for large scale cooperation in developing a web of interdependent and mutually supportive cyber businesses.

"The government will therefore continue to support Mimos not because Mimos needs help but because Malaysia does," he said speaking during his official visit to Mimos Berhad at Technology Park Malaysia here.

In return for that support, he would like to see Mimos and the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC), a promoter of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), working together to help a brave new breed of entrepreneurs namely the cyberpreneurs or netpreneurs.

The prime minister's visit was in conjunction with Mimos's third anniversary of its corporatisation.

Dr Mahathir said in today's knowledge-economy, research and development (R&D) was crucial and organisations like Mimos, which existed to develop technologies that benefit all Malaysians, must be supported.

"This kind of state intervention was anathema to many but as the progress of ICT (information communication technology) had shown, the state, not the innovative entrepreneur was the initiator of the information technology revolution.

"How else but by state intervention can we expect to accelerate technological modernisation and change the fate of our economy in just a few years?" he said.

He said through organisations like government-backed Mimos and MDC, Malaysians would transform themselves into an informed society to enjoy a quality of life never imagined before.

Before being corporatised, Mimos was the acronym for the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems.

Dr Mahathir said in the mid-90s it became evident that Malaysia would not achieve Vision 2020 -- the national aspiration to attain developed-nation status by year 2020 -- by relying on the industrialisation and the answer to that dilemma was ICT.

He said with the help of Mimos and other consultants, Malaysia created this huge experiment called the MSC to almost universal acclaim and today, the MSC was on track to become the best incubator in the planet for hightech businesses.

The prime minister said Mimos should be thought of as the nation's "starship enterprise", the flagship of a fleet of cyber-businesses and the flag it carried was nothing less than the national consciousness for the knowledge society and knowledge-based industries.

Dr Mahathir said the recent economic crisis gave critics the opportunity to wet-blanket Malaysia's enthusiasm but he had always welcomed criticism from unfriendly quarters.

"I take it as a sign that I must be doing something right... the MSC is the only way forward for a country such as Malaysia," he said.

The MSC is a-750 sq km zone south of here designated as a hub for the development of multimedia products and services.

Dr Mahathir said countries that dragged their feet in developing new information highways would tend to become backwaters of economic activity.

As the government's highest level ICT think-tank, he said Mimos often worked behind the scene accomplishing its mandate quietly but effectively.

"Publicity per se is not on Mimos's agenda. Helping Malaysia be the best she can through ICT, is," he said.

As a mission-driven R&D institution, Mimos's mandate embraced nothing less than the profitability of an entire nation which was the achievement of the Vision 2020 through the social and economic opportunities of ICT.

Dr Mahathir believed that Mimos was succeeding in that mission with experts telling him that the MSC had put Malaysia on course for a tripling of its GDP by 2020.

The prime minister said it was important that ICT be used wisely according to local values and culture, and the only way to ensure both access and appropriateness was to take charge of technology development by Malaysian themselves.

"Take the continued western domination of the media for example. We could have resigned ourselves to the fact that kancils (mouse-deers) don't stand a ghost of a chance against the gajahs (elephants) of this world. We could have just ignored them and gone our own way.

"The other option of course would have been to fight it out. I don't believe in running away from fight but I am a little choosy when it comes to picking my opponents. There is wisdom in avoiding wrestling with pigs; the pig enjoys it and you both got filthy," he said to the laughter of the audience.

-- BERNAMA

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