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SGI chief: Malaysia an example for others

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MALAYSIA has demonstrated boldness and leadership qualities through the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) initiative, which has the potential of becoming a standard setting high-tech venture in the world.

Silicon Graphics World Trade Corporation (SGI) chairman Bob Bishop said these strong qualities could be replicated by other nations which intend to embark on their own national information technology initiative.

According to him, other Asian countries had somewhat followed the precedent set by Japan many years ago but not exactly on the same formula.

"Japan leveraged itself as a world recognised technology manufacturer but it was never really able to surpass the United States.

"Malaysia on the other hand, is already demonstrating more boldness and leadership than other Asian countries with the MSC. The Asian nations will actually copy this formula more and more," he told reporters at a Press conference in Cyberjaya yesterday.

Bishop, who is a member of the MSC International Advisory Panel (IAP), is in Malaysia for the third MSC IAP meeting which will be held in Cyberjaya from July 8 to 10.

He said despite the Asian financial crises, the focus and the priority of MSC has remained.

The progress is firstly measured by the number of MSC companies which now stands at 228. In addition, of the 228, there are more than 100 local small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs).

"The SMEs' participation is as critical as the multinational corporations', as there is a need to balance the strategies of the two groups and create a synergistic transfer of knowledge and people. If there are only MNCs, I think the project would fail," said Bishop.

MSC's progress can also be measured by visible projects such as the Multimedia University, the NTT Laboratory, and Putrajaya which is synergistic with Cyberjaya.

"Things have moved ahead of schedule. This makes sense strategically because in a regional crisis, I believe a venture like the MSC is the engine to pull us into the future.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has understood that and is emphasising on continuing the investment in the MSC," Bishop said.

He nevertheless stressed that the MSC does have gaps in its implementation and that the third IAP meeting will give members the opportunity to express their opinions on several issues.

According to Bishop, among the issues he would raise at the IAP meeting are the development of social ambience in the MSC and the availability of funds for venture capital and R&D.

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