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LUCENT-3G

LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES INVESTS US\$15 MLN TO SET UP 3G TECHNOLOGY

KUALA LUMPUR, March 7 (Bernama) -- Lucent Technologies, world's leading network service provider, has invested over US\$15 million to set up Asia-Pacific's first's third generation (3G) wireless application network research laboratory here.

This was a sheer upgrade from the existing 2G Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) technology lab established in March last year at its new Malaysian office at Petronas Twin Tower KLCC.

In announcing this today, Lucent's vice chairman, Ben Verwaayen, said this new 3G lab would be the only 3G lab in the region outside Japan.

It houses the prototype base-station, mobile station and a switch simulator that can allow multiple applications access such as the two-way video conference, surfing the internet and watching a streaming video.

He said video conferencing, surfing the net and watching a streaming video would run simultaneously over a one megabyte per second untethered wideband code device multiple access (cdma) air interface between the mobile station and the base station.

3G is the next generation of wireless technology with high-speed broadband network having the capacity to transmit data at 1MBPS faster than the Second Generation 2G Global Systems for Mobile Communications (GSM) network that transmits data at a much lower speed of 9.6 kilobites per second.

Verwaayen said that this 3G lab was a clear testimony of Lucent's intention to be the leader in driving the latest 3G wireless technology now existing on earth, on a commercial basis.

"And we want our Malaysian operation to spearhead this initiative and be the first one to reap the benefits," he told a press briefing on latest Lucent's plans in Malaysia.

Scott K.Erickson, vice president Wireless Networks Group, Asia Pacific & China regions expects that 3G technology will be available on a commercial basis in Asia Pacific by the middle to end of 2002, but it would be available in Japan a year earlier.

He said in less than a year, Lucent managed to secure an order book contracts of US1.2 billion in sales of wireless communications solutions encompassing the previous 2G GSM network.

"However, for 3G, it's quite difficult to determine now how big will be the expected sales from the 3G product because it is still too early to predict," he said when asked to comment on commercial prospect of 3G.

With the 3G, he said, people were talking about data race over the air upwards from an initially 284 megabits moving on to 1 mb," he said, adding the 3G lab here would be able to demonstrate.

Meanwhile, Verwaayen who is the International Advisory Panel (IAP) permanent member, said he met with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to make a proposal that could help MSC utilise state-of-the-art voice and data network technology.

Verwaayen is here to participate in the two-day third annual MSC IAP meeting in Cyberjaya, starting today.

He said Lucent has a unique ability to make substantial contributions to Malaysia's telecommunicaiton data and video networking infrastructure.

"We look forward to partnering with Telekom Malaysia and other local operators to build this 21st century network for the MSC, and offering Bell Laboratories' support for the development, by the Multimedia University and

other local firms, of "Service Creation" features and customized applications," he said.

Bell Labs is the research and development arm of the New Jersey-headquartered Lucent Technologies, which among others, designs, builds and delivers a wide range of public and private networks, communications systems and software.

Lucent's operations in Malaysia is represented by Lucent Technologies (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd which was accorded the MSC status in January 1998 and becoming the 100th to qualify.

Since then, it has set up a separate Multimedia Services Division and has over 150 staff in its GSM Regional Technical Centre, GSM Laboratory and Regional Commercial Operations Centre.

In addition, the company has provided academic assistance to the Malaysia Multimedia University through the Bell Labs Visiting Professorship Programme, an initiative proposed to the Prime Minister by Verwaayen during last year's IAP meeting.

In February this year, Lucent consolidated all its operations in Kuala Lumpur into a new headquarters in Petronas Twin Tower.

On Bell Labs Visiting Professorship Programme, he said he was looking at ways to expand the knowledge transfer to Malaysian engineers.

"To date Bell Labs scientists have trained 226 people in Malaysia and conducted training on optical and wireless communications and high-speed internet," he said. -- BERNAMA

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