08 SEP 2001
MSC-MICROSOFT
MICROSOFT PLEDGES COMMITMENT TO MSC

By: Abdul Muin Abdul Majid
     PUTRAJAYA, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- Microsoft Corporation will continue to
remain committed to Malaysia and its Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC)
project in ways the software giant can help create new software companies
among Malaysian enterprises.
     Its vice-president, Michael Rawding, said this was conveyed to Datuk
Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his meeting at the Prime Minister's office
here, today.
     "What we talked about with the prime minister is a continuation of the
theme that Microsoft has been focused on in Malaysia and that is the
development of the local software industry and the kind of knowledge that
local software companies need to be competitive and effective," he told
reporters after the meeting.
     He was one of eight MSC International Advisory Panel (IAP) members and
representativeS who held one-on-one talks with Dr Mahathir on the last of
the three-day 5th MSC-IAP gathering.
     Rawding said the discussions also touched on the use of MSC flagship
applications as stimulants for the local software industry and how small
and medium industries (SMIs) in non-IT sectors could use the technology to
be more effective and competitive.
     "In fact, we talked about what we are trying to work on in Penang where
we are trying to help tier-two and tier-three suppliers in the electronics
industry use the Internet to connect up more effectively to the global
supply chain," he added.
     Rawding said Microsoft was pleased with the progress of the MSC and
that the "exciting thing for us is to actually meet with and take a look at
some of the great softwares that are being developed."
     The series of meetings lasted for more than four hours with the first
person to meet Dr Mahathir at 9am being Dr John Gage of Sun Microsystems
and the last, Nokia Corporation's Mikko Heikkonen.
     The prime minister also met C.D Tam of Motorola; Ambassador Diana Lady
Dougan (Centre for Strategic and International Studies); Kjell Sorme
(Ericsson Asia Pacific); Olivier Picard (Alcatel Southeast Asia); and
Antonio Romero (IBM Asean/South Asia).
     Meanwhile, Dr Gage said the prime minister reiterated his dedication to
changing the face of education in Malaysia.
     "For years, we have been working together to allow every school in
Malaysia to be linked to the Internet, to take advantage of changes in
educational materials, not just for the students but also the teachers," he
said.
     He said more often than not, the students nowadays were more
technology-savvy than their teachers.
     "So we discussed the methods that we can use in Malaysia to enable
teachers to stay abreast with new developments and, in turn, convert that
into teaching," Dr Gage said.
     Meanwhile, Alcatel's Picard said he had renewed his company's
commitment to continue investing in Malaysia and the MSC in particular.
     He said Alcatel now employed some 500 people in Malaysia of which 70 to
80 percent were either engineers or technicians and that plans were afoot
to recruit more people for its operation in this country.
     IBM's Romero said he and Dr Mahathir talked about a few particular
areas where IBM was working on including the certification of knowledge

workers.

He said a good deal of time was spent discussing about life sciences which his company believed would be the area for the next wave of technology.

"We also spent some time takling about things we have done and additional plans that we have to help with the initiatives for MSC development, particularly in terms of taking the MSC abroad," he said.

On another note, Romero said it was easy to criticise the MSC but it was much more difficult to be constructive.

"And I'd rather be constructive. I think this is a tremendous initiative which is making tremendous progress. We could always do things better. There's always room for improvement and we'll continue to be supportive," he added. -- BERNAMA

MAM MR