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MSC-Lucent Forum

MSC NOT CONTRIBUTING AS MUCH AS EXPECTED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) was not contributing as much as expected.

However, interest in the MSC as well as investment and commitment to invest was way ahead of progress, he told reporters after officiating the MSC-Lucent Bell Labs Technology Forum here today.

He was responding to a question on foreign reports which said the MSC was facing problems. The Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) had yesterday responded by saying that the MSC has been making progress although some areas would require closer attention and effort.

Elaborating further at the same press conference, MDC's executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah said efforts would be made to promote the MSC by examining closely recommendations made in the Implementation Council Meeting report and to come out with necessary framework for action.

Among the recommendations were for the MSC to have customised incentives for specific technologies rather than broad generic incentives.

It must also mandate a one-stop agency to make quick approval for customised incentives as companies cannot wait too long as they are also being lured by other hubs as well.

Currently, there are 471 MSC status approved companies including 40 world-class firms. Four-hundred and twenty of them are already in operation.

Dr Othman said the RM95 million invested by MSC status companies to date was miniscule compared with the various activities that were carried out.

Among the companies, 52 had invested in research and development directly in the MSC. These include NTT, Lucent, CSA, Articulate Online, Motorola and British Telecoms.

On collaborations between universities and corporations, the Prime Minister said some companies were very keen to participate in the projects and R&D done by the universities and some had even financed the chairs.

For example, the R&D activities of the Multimedia University had benefitted from the Lucent Bell Labs Visiting Professorship Programme resulting in seven patent applications.

-- BERNAMA

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