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Action Plan on creativity soon

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - There will be a national "Action Plan on Forging the Creativity Agenda" by the end of March, the outcome of an international forum participated by panellists such as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Professor M.S. Swaminathan and several Nobel Laureates.

As part of the plan to produce a Malaysian Nobel Prize winner by 2020, a challenge thrown by Dr Mahathir in 1998, the International Forum on Creativity will be held on March 20-22 at the Securities Commission in Bukit Kiara here.

Organising committee chairman Professor Datuk Dr Mazlan Othman said the Action Plan would forge the creativity agenda for the country towards achieving excellence in various fields, especially in science and technology.

"It will outline the strategic plan and it will be action-orientated. We have to go beyond motherhood statements; that is why we are not calling it a declaration," she said.

She said part of the Action Plan was to set up groups that would undertake high-powered, world-class and innovative research that would take Malaysia towards the Nobel Prize.

"Winning the Nobel Prize is just the apex of the entire creativity movement. But the apex cannot exist by itself, so we are hoping there will be a foundation that will build towards that," she said.

The forum is being held in conjunction with the opening of the Nobel Prize Centennial Exhibition themed "Cultures of Creativity: Individuals and Milieus", to be held at the National Science Centre from March 20 to June 27.

There will be six sessions participated by international scientists and speakers such as The Nobel Foundation executive director Professor Svante Lindqvist, The Creativity Centre co-founder Dr Marilyn Fryer from the United Kingdom, Stockholm School of Economics secretary of the Committee for the Economics Prize Professor Peter Englund and Hoseo University president Professor Kun Mo Chung.

From Malaysia, participants include Institute of Strategic and International Studies chairman Tan Sri Dr Noordin Sopiee, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Malaysian Institute of Economic Research executive director Dr Mohamed Ariff.

The forum will be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who will give a keynote address entitled "A Culture of Creativity for a Progressive Society".

The highlight of the forum, Mazlan said, would be the 'Premier Forum' with panellists Dr Mahathir, plant geneticist Swaminathan, who has been described as the 'Father of Economic Ecology', and two Nobel Laureates whose attendance have yet to be confirmed.

She said the organising committee was hoping to get Professor Ahmad Zuwail, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry for 1999, as one of them.

"If he cannot come we are hoping that video conferencing can be done. We are also targetting Leo Esaki (1973 Nobel Laureate in Physics)."

The forum is going to be filled with "interesting storytelling" that will describe the environment and background of Nobel Prize winners that led to creative thinking, such as educational institutes that produced several laureates.

"There has been no one event that I would call the cornerstone. I am

hoping this forum will be a turning point because we cannot go back to the way we use to do things," she said.

She will be presenting the Action Plan, the culmination of the discussions and views in the forum, on the last day.

The Action Plan will then be handed over to Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding, who will give the closing speech at the forum.