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Gathering to evaluate progress of MSC

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THE seventh Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) International Advisory Meeting (IAP), which marks Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's last appearance as chairman, starts in Cyberjaya today.

The annual gathering, which ends on Saturday, of the big guns in the information and communications technology (ICT) industry from around the world is held to gauge the progress of Malaysia's own Silicon Valley.

A total of 17 IAP members and 14 representatives are attending this year's meeting which will discuss topics such as business strategies in the new economy, technopreneur ecosystem, global outsourcing, creative industries as economic and cultural asset growth areas, ubiquitous devices and broadband technologies, and university-industry collaborations.

In addition, the issue of digital divide that the MSC's steering arm - Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) - believes is crucial in taking the MSC into its next phase will take centre stage.

Apart from regular attendees such as Silicon Graphics Inc's chairman and chief executive officer Bob Bishop, Acer Inc's chairman and chief executive officer Dr Stan Shih, Stanford University's Professor William Miller, Cutler & Company's managing director Dr Terry Cutler, Sun Microsystems' chief scientist John Gage and Cyber Century Forum's chairman Diana Lady Dougan, this year will feature two new IAP members - Dennis Roberson who is Illinois Institute of Technology's vice provost for new initiatives and Satyam Computer Services Ltd's chairman Ramalinga Raju.

Cambridge University's vice chancellor Emeritus Professor Sir Alec Broers is attending for the first time and Heritage Foundation's director of Hong Kong Office & Counsellor to the President, Ken Sheffer, is here as an observer.

While in previous years, the number of companies granted MSC status is used as a measure of the success of the project so far, hopefully this year more fundamental issues such as the challenges and stumbling blocks can be discussed.