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More to attend 7th IAP meet in Sept

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THE Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) continues to receive international recognition, with a larger turnout of members expected at the seventh MSC

International Advisory Panel (IAP) meeting next month.

Multimedia Development Corp senior vice president Dr Muhammad Ghazie Ismail said a total of 17 IAP members and 14 representatives have confirmed their participation in the meeting scheduled for September 4-5.

"This was an increase from 14 members and 12 representatives who attended the meeting last year.

"In fact, this was the largest turnout of members and representatives since IAP was established seven years ago," he told a media conference in Cyberjaya yesterday.

Contrary to critics, Muhammad Ghazie said this proved that the MSC has been successful and on course to achieving its goal as a regional hub for information technology.

Last month, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had also quashed sceptism about the viability of the MSC by stressing that the MSC had been able to attract more than 800 companies.

At the opening of Ericsson's RM80 million Malaysian headquarters and regional hub on July 29, Dr Mahathir had said that the MSC and its flagship hub-city, Cyberjaya, were moving successfully in the envisaged direction and were not a failure as some critics believed.

He (Dr Mahathir) had said the MSC's success could also be measured in the overwhelming interest shown by technology-based corporations, foreign and local, in operating from the "intelligent" area.

On the seventh IAP meeting, Muhammad Ghazie said the meeting will witness two new members who have been promoted from representative status.

The two new members are Satyam Computer Services chairman Ramalingam Raju and Dennis Robertson of Illinois Institute of Technology.

Others attending include University of Cambridge Vice Chancellor Emeritus

Professor Sir Alec Broers, Motorola executive vice president Gene Delaney,

SAP Asia Pacific president and chief executive officer (CEO) Hans-Peter Klaey and Fujitsu senior vice president for corporate Dr Kazuo Murano.

The IAP members who had confirmed their participation at the meeting include Silicon Graphics Inc chairman and CEO Bob Bishop, Professor William F. Miller of Stanford University, Cutler & Co managing director Dr

Terry Cutler, Ericsson executive vice president Ragnar Back, Infosys Technologies Ltd chairman and chief mentor N.R. Narayana Murthy, and

Siemens information and communication network board member Anton Hendrik Schaaf.

Also confirming attendance are The Heritage Foundation president Dr Edwin J Feulner, Sun Microsystems chief researchers and director of science Dr John Gage, the Acer Group chairman and CEO Datuk Dr Stan Shih, Japan Institute of International Socio-Economic Studies Datuk Dr Tadahihiro Sekimoto, Oracle Corp executive vice president Professor Derek Williams, Cyber Century Forum chairman Ambassador Diana Lady Dougan, IDtrack president Robert Madge, and NTT Communications Corp president and CEO Masanobu Suzuki.

As usual, the Prime Minister will engage in extensive dialogues with the IAP members to refine the development of MSC as well as chart its future direction.

"The IAP meetings have generated recommendations that have been incorporated into the strategy for the development of the MSC's progress and development significantly with some of them personally overseeing the projects undertaken," Muhammad Ghazie said.

He said several key speakers will present their working papers at the meeting, with topics ranging from business strategies to collaboration between universities and industry on high-technology.

"The topics of discussion will be much focus on the convergence of technology," he said.

Asked on the visible success of the MSC, Muhammad Ghazie pointed out the implementation of the national identification smartcard called "MyKad" is one of the success stories.

"We have already produced six million of these smartcards and hope to export our technological products to other countries.

"Currently, we are negotiating with several countries, especially in South-East Asia and West Asia to use our high-technology product," he said.

On the question of whether Dr Mahathir will continue to chair the IAP meeting next year after his retirement as the Prime Minister in late October, Muhammad Ghazie said under the normal practice, the meeting will be chaired by the Prime Minister.

This would mean that Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will succeed Dr Mahathir as IAP chairman in 2004.