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( PRIME MINISTER )

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MSC-LUCENT BELL LABS TECHNOLOGY FORUM

VENUE: MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR

DATE: 29 MAR 2001

TIME:

I wish to thank the organisers, the Multimedia Development Corporation and Lucent Technologies (M) Sdn Bhd, for inviting me to officiate the opening of the MSC-Lucent Bell Labs Technology Forum here today.

2. The MSC-Lucent Bell Labs Forum idea was first mooted during Mr Ben Verwaayen's visit to Malaysia in March last year. Ben, who is the Vice-Chairman of Lucent Technologies Inc, is a permanent member of the MSC International Advisory Panel (IAP) and is one of the key supporters of the MSC initiative.

3. In my discussion with Ben, he highlighted that Bell Labs traditionally hold technical seminars and talks on technology trends and visions especially in the networking area. We talked about the possibility of expanding the seminar programme beyond purely scientific and technical topics into the realm of its impact on our everyday lives and businesses of the future. From this simple idea, the MSC-Lucent Bell Labs Technology Forum was conceived.

4. Through this forum, we hope that our local scientists and corporate executives could interact and network with the scientists and technologists from Lucent and Bell Labs on a broad range of technologies, particularly in telecommunication and computing.

5. Among other things, the forum aims to share and present updates of technological developments in the field of telecommunication; in addition to providing insights on the direction of these developments and to outline its implications, and the methods of managing the visible future by analysing these foreseeable technological developments and trends.

6. Malaysia will gain significantly as one of the spin-offs expected is the sparking and collaboration in R&D activities in the computing and telecommunication field among our local universities and business organisations with centres of excellence around the globe. One such example is the R&D activities in Multimedia University, which benefits from the Lucent Bell Labs Visiting Professorship Programme.

7. The forum will also serve as a platform for smart

partnerships amongst the industry driven R&D centres and as a guide to assist Malaysian companies and universities to define strategic issues, directions and focus in their R&D activities. The forum will also include dialogue sessions between Malaysian R&D communities and Lucent Bell Labs technology executives.

8. Some of the technological developments highlighted in this forum will spur the rapid growth of Internet usage and application and the developments in the field of telecommunications into the next generation.

9. They will become the foundation and catalyst for the creation of Knowledge economies and Knowledge societies. The emergence of knowledge societies has been a central factor in driving the growth in international trade and contribution towards national wealth creation.

10. Innovation, R&D and the role of knowledge workers are becoming key elements in the new economic model as we move from commodity based trading to electronic trading. We must continue to focus our efforts in encouraging entrepreneur skills with venture fund support and ensure our graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge that is in line with the changes in the market and the way we do business.

11. The Multimedia Super Corridor initiative has provided many of the enablers for K-economy to flourish such as ready pool of knowledge workers from the MSC located universities, world class telecommunications facilities, venture funding, incubator centre network for entrepreneur growth and the nurturing of the ICT SME's.

12. The MSC will lead the way for Malaysia into the Information Age and K-economy. It will help Malaysia to develop into a K-society in line with the Vision 2020 and towards this goal we Malaysians must strive forward.

13. I hope that we have all gained a better understanding and insight into the potential opportunities, challenges and form new partnerships and alliances to enable us to successfully prosper in the emerging K-economy.

14. In spite of all the recent changes in Lucent, I am very happy that Lucent has continued to show its tremendous support for the MSC through its various commitments.

15. I am confident that this forum will bring forth all the benefits that it was set out to bring to the MSC, the Malaysian scientific, technical and business communities.

16. On that note, I have great pleasure in declaring open the MSC-Lucent Bell Labs Technology Forum.