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Becoming globally competitive with ICT

Multimedia development corp (MDeC) CEO Datuk Mohd Badlisham Ghazali lauded the budget's information and communications technology (ICT) focus. "The key initiatives under the Budget will bring Malaysia closer to an innovation-led, high-income economy that is globally competitive," he said.

"With the focus on human capital development, it is clear that the government understands that much of this transformation sits squarely on our ability to deliver the right quality and quantity of talent."

Badlisham noted the urgent need to increase efforts to motivate, enhance and retain human capital in the country and attract those from abroad.

Specifically for the ICT sector, where technology evolves rapidly, the measures offered will help address shortages and quality issues.

MDeC has been allocated RM50 million to train graduates in ICT to enhance their employability under the "Finishing School" initiative. It will support efforts to upskill an additional 25,000 graduates to meet demand in the ICT segment.

Another key initiative is the MY Creative Content Programme for the multimedia creative content industry. The RM119 million allocated will spur the creation of Malaysian multimedia content. "The creative industry is still a relatively untapped but potentially

lucrative industry. The development of this sector must be further accelerated as a source of national growth and income," Badlisham said.

Meanwhile, Datuk Abdul Wahab Abdullah, president and CEO of Mimos, lauds the government's allocation of RM411 million for research and development and commercialisation (R&D&C) activities next year. "We need to accelerate the commercialisation process of locally developed technologies and provide an innovation eco-system for the industry," said Wahab.

The focus on R&D&C is also in line with Mimos' mission of pioneering innovative frontier technologies to grow globally competitive Malaysian industries, added Wahab. The ultimate aim is to move the country's ICT industry up the value chain.

Wahab was also pleased with the recognition that human capital and knowledge development are the keys to differentiating Malaysia. "The government's concerted efforts to ensure an adequate supply of domain experts for the country through the restructuring and further strengthening of education and training is a step in the right direction," he noted. Mimos currently harnesses industry-ready talent in ICT through its apprenticeship programme known as the Centre of Domain Expertise Acceleration in ICT or CODE8.