

## Press Release

### **‘Restricting foreign worker construction agriculture and plantation sectors only will devastate manufacturing and services sectors’**

PETALING Jaya, Thurs, 30 Aug 2020 – The government’s decision to restrict foreign workers to only three sectors – construction, agriculture and plantation – would further devastate the operations of industries in other sectors which are trying very hard to recover from the Movement Control Order (MCO).

Of the two million registered foreign workers, less than 42% (837,800) were employed in the construction, agriculture and plantation sectors while the rest are employed in manufacturing (about 700,000), services (about 309,000) and domestic workers (about 130,000).

“Obviously, sectors that are denied foreign workers would be faced with acute shortage of manpower and cause major disruptions to their operations,” said MEF Executive Director Datuk Hj. Shamsuddin Bardan here today.

“It is most unfortunate that the government had not discussed the matter with the stakeholders on such major policy shift prior to the announcement in Parliament.”

Shamsuddin said the major question that the government has to answer is whether the locals who are unemployed would be willing to take up the jobs after the foreign workers from the other sectors of the economy are repatriated.

“Everybody knows that foreign workers are only allowed to be recruited after the employers had proven that there were no local workers available to fill up the vacancies.”

He said phasing out of the foreign workers may be possible if done in stages, and if it can be shown that locals are prepared to fill up the available vacancies currently occupied by foreign workers.

“But it’s impossible to expect the local workers to take up the positions vacated by foreign workers overnight,” added Shamsuddin.

Yesterday, Deputy Human Resources Minister YB Tuan Awang Hashim announced in the Dewan Rakyat that the government had decided to allow foreign workers to work in the construction, agricultural and plantation sectors; while jobs in the other sectors are to be filled by local workers.

For further information, contact the MEF Secretariat at 03-7955-7778 or fax 03-7955-9008 or email [mef-hq@mef.org.my](mailto:mef-hq@mef.org.my).

**30 JULY 2020**