

## **MEF: Formulate SOPs based on international best practices and stakeholder inputs**

PETALING JAYA: The policies and SOPs to curb the spread of Covid-19 should be carefully formulated based on international best practices and the inputs of stakeholders.

Concerned by the devastating impact of the prolonged lockdowns on the national economy, MEF President Dato' Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P. said such policies should be prudently considered to safeguard the vitality of Malaysia's economy and the livelihood of the *rakyat*.

"The series of lockdowns which are being imposed to contain Covid-19 are causing extreme economic damage to the country," he said.

"The World Health Organisation (WHO) had also warned governments against imposing the lockdowns to contain Covid-19 due to its dire consequences.

"We have seen how badly the lockdowns affect the SMEs and micro enterprises and especially those in the medium and lower income groups.

"This distressing situation has further deteriorated with serious social implications on the rise.

"MEF hopes the NSC would cease to impose lockdown to contain Covid-19 and engage with stakeholders to ensure that pragmatic and flexible approaches are implemented to effectively manage the pandemic."

To add clarity and effectiveness to the SOPs, Dato' Dr Syed Hussain said the various ministries and agencies involved in its implementation must be properly coordinated and aligned.

"At the moment there is some misalignment between the ministers with each making contradictory statements while the ad hoc SOPs pose a huge challenge to employers besides being confusing and at times irrational," he said.

"For instance, there is no clarity on who issues the approval letters as some of our members have applied to MITI to operate but were told that the NSC decides during EMCO. This creates unwanted frustration.

While addressing the spread of Covid-19, there must be empathy to business too where more than 90 per cent of all companies are SMEs who employ employees.

"The failure of businesses is going to have direct impact on unemployment."

He said to avoid mass unemployment, the way forward to safeguard business would be by vaccination and tight SOP with focus on Selangor and KL.

"We need a dedicated team set up to focus only on these two areas and they must be on the fast track on screening and vaccination.



“We cannot use the general vaccination approach to address the pandemic at the industries as what is required is a targeted strategy.

“Focus is the name of the game and there must be dedicated resources and vaccination for factories in these two areas.

“We should not allow employers, employees and the *rakyat* to continue to suffer due to this situation which must be totally avoided in future.”

Notwithstanding this, Dato’ Dr Syed Hussain commended the government’s ongoing efforts to expedite the vaccination of the *rakyat*, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

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).

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