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MEDIA RELEASE

MEF: MEF calls for the Foreign Workers One Channel System be spearheaded by the Ministry of Human Resources

Petaling Jaya: The businesses are still trying to recover from the devastating impact of Covid 19 and the recent big floods and get back to normal as quickly as we can. With the opening up of all the economic sectors, employers need foreign labour in many sectors like plantation, construction, manufacturing, restaurants and services sectors. These are the sectors that locals are not keen to fill up the vacancies that exist. However, the process of bringing in new foreign workers to Malaysia had not been smooth thus far and employers are still waiting for the arrival of new foreign workers

MEF President Dato' Dr. Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P. stated that "MEF proposes that the recruitment and management of foreign workers including foreign domestic workers be placed under one ministry for efficiency and business efficacy. MEF proposes that the Ministry of Human Resources be given the mandate as the Ministry to administer and manage the recruitment of foreign workers including foreign domestic workers under the One Channel System. The Ministry of Human Resources (MoHR) can get all the requirements approved instead of cross ministry involvement which waste too much time on bureaucracy and add costs. We believe MoHR being the custodian of Labour working with employers and unions should be the one stop Ministry. MOHR also regulates the way we work and had enough enforcement capacity to manage this. A one stop Centre under MoHR would be able to resolve most of the issues on recruitment and management of foreign workers."

" Due to the freeze on recruitment of foreign workers and the inability to replace those whose PLKS expired for the last two years, the employers are facing serious shortages of workers. The businesses are losing billions and the longer we wait the more we lose. As an example, palm oil plantations face acute shortage of harvesters that continue to result in loss of revenue for planters of more than RM 1 bil per month and income to the government due to loss in palm oil yield. Palm oil industry may not be able to compete with that of

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Malaysia's neighbours by virtue of higher cost of sales and wastage. The government should urgently address the shortage of more than 75,000 workers in the plantation sector. Even though the government approved the intake of 32,000 new foreign workers in September 2021, up till now the workers are not yet in Malaysia. The construction sector in the country is facing a serious shortage of workers causing some major construction projects to fall behind schedule. Shortage of workers severely impacted production especially for the E& E industries, disrupted supply chain and business operations resulting in delays and being unable to meet new orders from both local and foreign buyers.” Adds Dato’ Dr. Syed Hussain

Dato’ Dr. Syed Hussain states further that “We all need to work together to get our economy back to track. There are many challenges ahead of us and it’s not getting easier. We know MoHR is doing its level best. But by having too many ministries involved cannot solve the delays in bringing new foreign workers urgently. It has to be single source where communication can be much faster, and issues resolve better. This has to be done by MoHR. We must be clear that all labour matters should be managed and monitored by MoHR .The MoHR is the enforcement ministry of foreign labour issues in all aspects. Therefore, they know better on the needs of our businesses and to ensure all human resources requirements are complied with. We appeal to the government to please let MOHR be the sole contact point for foreign workers.”

“Under the tripartism principles Employers and Employees and their Trade Unions have many meetings with MOHR to discuss labour policies and resolve human resources matters. The MoHR officials from the JTK Manpower Department, Skill Development Department and DOSH are well aware of the situation on the ground”.

For further information, contact the MEF Secretariat at 03-7955-7778 or fax 03-7955-9008 or email mef-hq@mef.org.my.

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