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## MEDIA RELEASE

# MEF: MALAYSIA'S RATIFICATION OF PROTOCOL TO THE ILO CONVENTION 29 WILL BETTER ADDRESS ISSUES ON FORCED LABOUR

PETALING JAYA: The ratification of Protocol to the ILO Convention 29 on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 is part of the Government's initiatives to address forced labour issues in Malaysia. The ratification of the protocol on forced labour demonstrates the Government's commitments to put in place effective measures to combat and eliminate all forms of forced labour. Malaysia's ratification of the Protocol to the Convention 29 is sending a strong signal that Malaysia is determined to put an end to forced labour practices. YB Datuk Seri M Saravanan, the Minister of Human Resources personally deposited the instrument on the ratification to the Director General of ILO Mr Guy Ryder in Geneva. Malaysia became the 58th country in the world, and the second ASEAN member State after Vietnam to ratify the Protocol to Convention 29.

MEF President Dato' Dr. Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P. stated that "MEF congratulates YB Datuk Seri M Saravanan, the Minister of Human Resources and the Government of Malaysia for ratifying the Protocol to ILO Convention 29 on Forced Labour. Malaysia had put in place initiatives to combat and eliminate forced labour such as the National Action Plan on Forced Labour that seeks to eliminate forced labour by 2025, effective enforcement of the Employment Act 1955 and Employers' Minimum Standards of Housing, Accommodation and Amenities Act 1990. Private sector employers are also required to conduct due diligence and employers are required to report incidents of forced labour in their supply chain. Forced labour incidences may occur within the supply chain due to lack of proper mechanisms to address the issues of forced labour"

"The Minister of Human Resources YB Datuk Seri M Saravanan had boldly championed the rights of employers and employees in Malaysia. As the largest employer federation, MEF totally supports the efforts the YB Minister and the Ministry of Human Resources to overcome any form of labour issues in Malaysia" This ratification is a big win for Malaysia which is also a win for Malaysian employers and businesses"

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Dato' Dr. Syed Hussain adds that “ MEF as the largest employer association in the country, is very pleased that the Prime Minister YAB Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri, together with the Minister of Human Resources YB Datuk Seri M Saravanan and the Ministry of Human Resources have taken the lead in driving the efforts to combat and eliminate forced labour in Malaysia. MEF is honored to support the government especially the Ministry of Human Resources in making sure that Malaysia will adhere to all the requirements to support the better treatment of workers. Congratulations again to YB Datuk Seri M Saravanan for taking this bold step that shows that we are serious about tackling the forced labour issues in the country. This will no doubt put Malaysia in a positive standing in the global economy and employment market and demonstrates Malaysia's real commitments in solving the problem of forced labour effectively.”

The Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 29 is a legally-binding instrument that requires Member States of ILO to put in place measures on prevention, protection and remedy in giving effect to the Convention 29 obligations to eliminate forced labour. The Protocol on Convention 29 supplements the Forced Labour Convention 29 and as such only ILO member States that have ratified Convention 29 may ratify the Protocol. Malaysia had ratified Convention 29 on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1957.

As Malaysia had ratified the Protocol to Convention 29 Malaysia must submit a report every 3 years on measures that have been taken to implement the Protocol, which will be examined by the ILO supervisory bodies. The ILO has provided technical assistance on combatting forced labour in Malaysia through its research, capacity building and field-based projects especially through the Triangle Project.

Dato' Dr. Syed Hussain adds further that “MEF stands by fair and professional practices in labour management. MEF believes that the greatest asset any organisation has is its People, the employees. Treat them well and your productivity will go up.”

“MEF is a member of the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour (GBNFL) and had collaborated with the said Alliance to raise awareness of MEF members on forced labour and measures to eliminate it. By being a member of the GBNFL, MEF is serious about combatting and eliminating forced labour, as shown by the



extensive seminars on elimination of forced labour held around the country. MEF also collaborates with the ILO Bridge Project to raise awareness on forced labour by publishing videos and book on forced labour which was translated to Malay and Mandarin for better reach out to the employers community. However, the task is huge and new forms of collaboration, nationally, regionally and internationally are required to tackle the root causes of forced labour”

For further information, please 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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