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MEDIA RELEASE

MEF: Ratification of ILO Convention 155 Aligns Malaysia's OSH Laws with International Standards

Geneva: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) fully supports the Malaysian government's decision to ratify ILO Convention No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health. This Convention mandates the adoption of a coherent national occupational safety and health policy and outlines actions to be taken by governments and employers to enhance workplace safety and health.

The Minister of Human Resources, YB Encik Steven Sim Chee Keong, is currently in Geneva to formally submit Malaysia's ratification of ILO Convention 155 to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General, Mr. Gilbert F. Hounbo.

MEF's President, Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman, P.J.N, J.P. states that "MEF fully endorsed this significant step, emphasizing, that the ratification of ILO Convention 155 underscores Malaysia's commitment to aligning its occupational safety and health practices with global standards. This decision reflects a collaborative effort between the government, employers, unions and international bodies to prioritize the well-being of our workforce."

"MEF has consistently advocated for employers in Malaysia to prioritize the safety and health of workers. MEF has raised awareness about the statutory duty of employers under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) to provide, as far as practicable, a safe and healthy workplace and to uphold the right to a safe and healthy working environment." Adds Datuk Dr Syed Hussain.

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Datuk Dr Syed Hussain states further that “The ratification of ILO Convention 155 is timely, coinciding with significant amendments to the OSHA, which, effective from June 1st, 2024, expands its applicability to all workplaces throughout Malaysia. Existing obligations under OSHA, including the requirement to implement a workplace safety and health policy under section 16, will now apply universally.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 (OSHA) establishes the legal framework for occupational safety and health in Malaysia. Its objectives include:

- a) Securing the safety, health, and welfare of persons at work against risks arising from work activities;
- b) Protecting individuals at workplaces from risks arising from work activities;
- c) Promoting an occupational environment adapted to the physiological and psychological needs of workers;
- d) Providing a regulatory framework to maintain or improve safety and health standards.”

The Occupational Safety and Health (Amendment) Act 2022, which received royal assent on March 4, 2022, and came into force on June 1, 2024, introduces substantial changes to OSHA. It expands the Act's scope to cover all workplaces, including public services and statutory authorities, reinforcing the philosophy of self-regulation where those working with and creating risks share responsibility for safety and health management.

“MEF calls on all OSH practitioners to engage with the latest amendments to the OSH Act, which emphasize self-regulation. The Act, initially introduced in 1967 with the Factories and Machinery Act and later evolved with the OSH Act in 1994, has a long history of improving workplace safety through government and self-regulation mechanisms.



In conjunction with these developments, MEF organized a conference attended by approximately 200 OSH practitioners. The conference facilitated discussions with members of the Department of Occupational Safety and Health, SOCSO representatives, ILO specialists, union leaders, and safety professionals on how OSH self-regulation aligns with the new legislative framework.”

Datuk Dr Syed Hussain emphasised that “As the apex employer organization in Malaysia, MEF is dedicated to promoting the rights and interests of employers and contributing to national responses to global standards outlined in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Rights at Work. MEF believes that occupational safety and health (OSH) is crucial for business sustainability. Neglecting OSH can negatively impact overall business performance, emphasizing that OSH is not just a legal requirement but a shared responsibility between employers and employees.”

For further information, please contact the MEF Secretariat at 03-7498 7200 or email mef-hq@mef.org.my.

11th June 2024