



## 'Serve industry for five years to get RM1,500'

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**Kota Kinabalu:** The State and Federal governments should emphasise on improving the qualification and productivity of workers before implementing the RM1,500 minimum wage promise for the private sector nationwide.

"Workers must prove themselves by remaining in the same industry for five years before they should be eligible for higher wage standards commensurate with their productivity level," said Datuk Seri Panglima Wong Khen Thau.

The new Sabah branch chairman of the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCCI) added that the Government should insist that school leavers be trained or undergo further or higher education to be knowledge workers.

"They can work in different companies but they must stay in the same industry to prove their talent and productivity."

Wong stressed that quality human capital is a vital top priority factor of production crucial to Malaysia's and Sabah's economic vibrancy and success in the face of increasing competition and challenges.

Executive Director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan of Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), of which the Sabah Employers Association is also a member of, also called for a gradual implementation of the minimum wage of RM1,500 to be sustainable as "there are so many factors that need to be taken into account."

The streamlining of wages between the states in Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia is also yet to be completed.

"It will be too much of a pressure for the companies in Sabah and Sarawak to catch up with the minimum wage of RM1,500 now, so doing it gradually will be better," he said.

Earlier, Deputy Human Resource Minister Datuk Mahfuz Omar had clarified that the minimum wage was part of a five-year plan, not part of the 100-day implementation promises.

This year, the minimum wage was set for a review and the new rate was supposed to be enforced, effective July 1, but that failed to pass, with the new Government engrossed with other more pressing matters.

The current minimum wage is RM1,000 per month in Peninsular Malaysia and RM920 in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan.

Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) President Datuk Abdul Halim Mansor said the congress has long proposed to the National Wages Consultative Council that the minimum wage be raised to RM1,500. - David Thien