

MEF: Thanks for PEMULIH but nothing beats going back to business

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KUALA LUMPUR (June 28): The RM150 billion PEMULIH economic stimulus package announced today would provide temporary relief to the targeted groups, but for employers the best way forward would be to allow businesses to reopen, said the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

"While we appreciate all of the government's interventions in PEMULIH, we are of the view that the most effective way to address the issue of sustainability of business is to open up quickly," said MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman in a statement.

He said instead of relying on the government to dispense limited funds, businesses should be allowed to operate in a controlled environment to save businesses, jobs and the economy.

"As employers, we need to be self-reliant and not to depend on one-off handouts and many employers would not qualify for the handouts too.

"Businesses should be allowed to operate so that we can raise the cash to pay our own workers. The continuous lockdown will only destroy businesses beyond salvage. There is a need to adopt a holistic targeted public-private sector approach to manage this effectively," he said.

The MEF president also recommended a targeted holistic approach to be adopted in areas which record low numbers of Covid-19 infections and allowing most sectors of businesses to operate with strict standard operating procedures.

"For example, businesses in Selangor that are not part of any clusters should be allowed to operate, and this should be the same in states that have low infection rate and low usage of ICU beds, such as Terengganu, Perlis and Kedah.

"There is no reason for safe states to still wait for national threshold numbers to improve to reopen for business," he said.

The MEF also welcomed the government's decision to allow employers that have vaccinated all their employees to fully operate in the near future.

In this connection, Syed Hussain said the scheme to allow Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) contributors to use their HRDF contribution to pay for their employees' vaccination is timely.

"However, the limitation of funding up to 10% of the HRDF contributors' balance may be too little especially for the SMEs (small and medium enterprises)," he added.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today announced PEMULIH, or the National People's Well-Being and Economic Recovery Package, worth RM150 billion with a fiscal injection of RM10 billion, following the extension of the first phase of the National Recovery Plan, under which the Full Movement Control Order remains in force and economic activities are greatly curtailed.

Edited by S Kanagaraju