

Highlight

Let industries determine flexible work arrangements based on business requirements — MEF

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KUALA LUMPUR (June 25): Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) should not be dictated to businesses, but let industries themselves determine based on requirements of their business, said the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said this is because businesses vary from one industry and sector to another, such as manufacturing, banking, tourism and hotels, retail trade, construction, plantation and many others.

He noted that each business is different and had its unique structures and production needs. Some are locally based, some are international based and governed by rules and regulations.

“Therefore, one must understand this before seeking to change the existing system of work. It should be recognised that not all businesses change and not all processes can be changed.

“The final decision really depends on the industry and conditions of the particular business,” he said in a statement on Saturday (June 25).

He said the MEF would like to note that as Malaysia began to transition to the endemic stage of Covid-19 from April 1, many organisations were adopting new working systems. Organisations that could take into account the work-from-home (WFH) experience during the pandemic would reap benefits in business productivity and sustainability as companies are continuously reimagining new strategies in attracting, retaining and engaging talent.

In a study conducted by United Nations Development Programme Malaysia and TalentCorp, 92% of employees stated that they would like to have regular WFH arrangements. FWAs, if implemented well, could improve both employees’ quality of life and productivity.

Meanwhile, Syed Hussain said among the challenges in implementing FWAs include lack of commitment from the top management, lack of engagement among employees that may lead to lower productivity and higher attrition rates, and that confidential data or information could be compromised.

Therefore, he hopes that the government would be able to support organisations in adopting and sustaining FWAs by providing clear guidance on the rights and obligations of organisations, for example guidelines on the request, reject and appeal process of FWAs. Also, offer flexibility and relax some regulations that may affect the ability of implementing certain types of FWAs, among others.

Recently, Deputy Human Resources Minister Datuk Awang Hashim said employees in the country who want to work on a flexible basis could apply for FWAs with their respective employers under an amendment to the Employment Act 1955 that will come into force on Sept 1.

Awang said FWA applications must be made in writing and could cover changes in working hours, working days and also the place of work.

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