Minimum wage must apply to micro workers too

Mininum wage exemption for micro employers tantamount to denying workers' rights.

KUALA LUMPUR: The proposed exemption for micro companies or employers to pay minimum wage to their workers is tantamount to denying the rights of the workers, Human Resources Minister Richard Riot Jaem said.

He said this was because employees of micro companies comprised mostly locals and did not receive any other allowances compared to employees of big companies.

"Most of the workers of micro companies are from the vulnerable group and should be helped and protected through the implementation of the minimum wage scheme," he said in a statement.

Riot said this in response to the report published by a local English daily recently, which stated the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) propose that the implementation of the minimum wage scheme among micro employers be reviewed.

Micro employers are employers who have only five or less workers.

Riot said the objective of the minimum wage scheme was to help the poor and low-income earners to earn sufficient salary to make ends meet.

As such, the minister said the exemption for micro employers to pay their workers minimum wage would prevent the employees from benefitting from the government's policy and hence, continue living in poverty.

"This is not in line with the government's aspiration to turn Malaysia into a fully inclusive developed nation by 2020," he said.

The minister also advised MEF to discuss the proposal in the National Wages Consultative Council meeting, where the opinions of the employees would also be taken into consideration before the final decision was made by the government.

In another development, Riot said the ministry was planning to implement double shifts or two learning sessions in all Industrial Training Institute (ILP) nationwide in a bid to achieve the target of producing 210 000 skilled-workers by next year

He said the proposal on the matter had been submitted to the Cabinet and was expected to be tabled soon. – *BERNAMA*