

RM1.57 bil cost of giving maternity leave

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian employers spent about RM1.57 billion annually in providing 60-day maternity leave for its female employees, a seminar on gender equality was told yesterday.

A study undertaken by the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) showed that each confinement cost RM7,500. This comprised RM3,000 in

wages and RM4,500 in over-time allowances.

In his paper on maternity protection, reconciling work and family responsibilities, MEF vice-president A. Ramadass said that under existing laws, employers bore this cost for up to five surviving children.

He said the cost would escalate to RM2 billion, if the leave

entitlement was to be increased to 84 days, as was the case in Singapore.

However, he pointed out that in Singapore, for the first two confinements, the employers paid for the first eight weeks and the additional four weeks were funded by the government.

The two-day seminar, which began yesterday, was

organised by the Human Resources Ministry, in alliance with the International Labour Organisation.

It was attended by 50 participants from various government agencies, trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

Lactation consultant Nor Kamariah Mohamad Alwi told the seminar that mother's

milk was a unique source of nutrition, immunity protection and a natural way of nurturing the future generation.

Nor Kamariah said the World Health Organisation recommended exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and that it be continued for up to two years with complementary foods. — Bernama



A. Ramadass says employers must bear maternity costs for up to five children