

MEF called for more consultation in Corporate Liability Provision

GEORGE TOWN: THE Malaysian Employers' Federation (MEF) has called for more consultation in relation to the proposed inclusion of a Corporate Liability Provision in the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009.

MEF president Tan Sri Azman Shah Haron said this was a sensitive decision to be made, as it placed blame entirely on the employers.

"This will be tough on us. We must have a broad debate on such issues.

"Give everyone a fair chance. This is very serious. Let us say something before it becomes law. Don't just push it down our throats," he said in a press conference here today after the opening of the MEF National Industrial Relations Conference 2014 by Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

The provision is among the topics of discussion at the conference, themed "Coping with Wider Employer's Responsibilities".

MEF's executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said so far they have only been invited for one session, but noted that they have not really been briefed on what would be included.

"In order for us to give a fair comment, it is important for us to know exactly what they want to provide in the law.

"Currently we are still hazy on what will be included in the provision. That is why we are seeking further consultation with the authorities," he said, adding that MEF and other organisations should be briefed on what the federal government intends to do.

Shamsuddin, in further expounding on the matter, said that looking at global developments, such a provision was a necessary requirement by most developed countries Malaysia is trading with.

"Based on that requirement, if we don't have a similar provision, then possibly they may not want to trade with us. So somehow, we need to provide for this, but the question is whether it is a fair thing to do.

"As the Chief Minister has mentioned, this can be too onerous on the private sector. Then people may not even want to establish their businesses here, if it is too onerous," he noted.

Most of the developed nations, Shamsuddin said, placed no restrictions when it came to corporate liability in companies, whether it was private or public sectors.

"The major issue is, whether the federal government, as the biggest employer in the country, with 1.3 million workers, if they will also be made liable for the actions of the government servants.

"If they are prepared for that, then possibly we can explore further. And if the civil servants are found guilty for corrupt practices, someone in the government may possibly be sent to jail," he added.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuan reportedly said the provision would enable private companies to be transparent and corruption-free in their businesses.

He stated that by including the provision in the Act, it would help to regulate companies and hence, generate more awareness on good corporate governance in the country.

He added that the proposed amendment would take place once a discussion with the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) has been held and if there is green light from the chambers and cabinet, the amendment would likely be tabled in Parliament latest in June.



MEF president Tan Sri Azman Shah Haron. Pix by Amir Irsyad Omar