

# MEF: Pay rise call a disappointment

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**PETALING JAYA:** The calls by several Cabinet ministers for private sector employers to increase wages are "disappointing" given the economic climate, said the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

Its executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said such calls did not augur well for employers and could be misinterpreted by their workers.

## 'Move by ministers does not augur well for employers'

Some companies were even considering retrenchments, he said in calling for a reality check.

"It is already good if bosses can fill employment in this current economy. Some countries are already talking about retrenchments.

"Even our Government announced revisions to Budget 2015, so I am disappointed by the calls of the ministers," he said.

Pemandu CEO Datuk Seri Idris

Jala, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of the Economic Planning Unit Datuk Seri Wahid Omar spoke of the issue of wage stagnation despite increased productivity and cost of living.

The ministers, during the Economic Transformation Programme's Economic Wrap-up 2014 on Thursday, hoped the private sec-

tor would raise salaries in line with productivity growth.

Attributing the wage stagnation to cheap foreign labour, Wahid said: "We don't price it properly."

He also criticised employers' attitude, saying that even during the minimum wage debate, they had complained.

"If employers can be generous in sharing the spoils, we can increase the overall income level."

Shamsuddin said countries such as Japan and the United States had seven times more productivity compared to Malaysia.

Singapore, he said, had four times productivity compared to Malaysia.

"The average annual productivity value per employee in Malaysia is only RM62,000 compared to Singapore which is RM173,000."

Shamsuddin said the ministers should call for a wage moratorium for the time being to give companies some "breathing space" to remain in business.