

# Provide allocation for day care, nursing centres, urges MEF

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By TEH ATHIRA YUSOF

**NATION**

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PETALING JAYA: There should be a clear budget allocated by the government to develop national day care centres and nursing centres to allow more women to join the workforce, says Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the government must form a committee to look at establishing national day care centres and nursing centres.

"We must appreciate and recognise that in our culture we place the family under the care of the women. Women are multi-talented and to a certain extent, overworked.

"We cannot change this overnight as it is deeply rooted in our culture and society," he said on Monday (Oct 2).

Syed Hussain said government agencies like the Social Security Organisation (Socso) and Employees Provident Fund (EPF) should play a role to look into these matters.

"Their pool of contributions depends on the working population and there must be more benefits for contributing members.

Syed Hussain said the country will never overcome the issue of women leaving the workforce if the government does not institutionalise national day care centres and ageing care centres.

He emphasised the need to address the issue at the national level as Malaysia is moving towards becoming an ageing society.

"We urgently need to go to the root cause and find out why women – who are equally competent and even better qualified – decided to drop off from employment especially once they are married and have children or need to take care of their parents.

"They do not come back to work when their children have grown up or their parents have passed on," he said.

Syed Hussain also acknowledged that employers under the private sector must continue to look deeper in creating better working conditions for women to join and remain in the workforce.

More than 90% of Malaysian employers are under the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) category and could not afford to provide day care centres for the elderly and children.

"Private sector employers have done much and are looking at ways to create and implement flexible work arrangements to attract and retain talents, especially the women employees," he said.