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MTUC

MTUC PROPOSES MINIMUM WAGE TO OVERCOME LABOUR SHORTAGE

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 1 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) today suggested that the government introduce the minimum wage concept, especially in the construction and agriculture sectors, to reduce dependence on foreign labour.

MTUC President Zainal Rampak said if this could be implemented, the question of luring retirees and housewives to join the workforce did not arise.

He said this when commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that the government would take steps to reduce dependence on foreign workers, whose number will swell to 2.3 million by the year 2000 if left unchecked.

Dr Mahathir, in his New Year message, said one way to curb the immigrant worker population was to train retirees and housewives to take up suitable jobs on a full-time or part-time basis.

Zainal also said the government could extend the retirement age from 55 to 60 to help overcome the labour shortage.

Malaysian Employers Federation Executive Director Mohd Zain Abdul Majid said most foreign workers in the country were in the building and agriculture sectors and it was unlikely that retirees and housewives could meet the demand for labour in these fields.

"Retirees and housewives can do only light work," he said.

Social activist Datuk Lee Lam Thye expressed support for the government's move to attract retirees and housewives to work.

"I always maintain that charity must begin at home and in this connection opportunities should be given to Malaysians who are able to work and contribute towards the nation," he said in a statement here.

Lee said re-employing retirees would help them financially as many had to support their children's education and also had other commitments.

"Besides the housewives, many wives of foreign nationality who are married to Malaysians, and who are professionals in their own right, should also be considered for employment here," he added. -- Bernama