

3 JAN 1996

Committee

SABAH SETS UP CABINET COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN WORKERS

KOTA KINABALU, Jan 3 (Bernama) -- Sabah today formed a cabinet committee to look into means to reduce dependence on foreign workers in the state, acting Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee said.

The committee, headed by state Resource Development and Enterprise Minister Datuk Joseph Kurup, follows Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to reduce over-dependence on foreign workers, he told reporters here.

Last Sunday, Dr Mahathir said the government would allow retirees and housewives to work in order to check the increasing influx of foreign workers into the country.

Yong said committee members included the state Industrial Development Minister Datuk Tham Nyip Shen and Rural Development Minister Datuk Yahya Hussin, permanent secretaries and heads of departments in various ministries.

"We expect the committee to come up with a set of proposals in three months on ways to reduce the dependence," he said after chairing a state cabinet meeting here.

Yong, who is also the state Finance Minister, said the state cabinet had no objections to the Federal government proposal to allow foreign wives take up employment.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob said on Tuesday that the government would allow foreign wives to work here provided they had the necessary qualifications.

Yong said, however, the state government would be very careful and only allow them to work on a case-by-case basis as it would not want foreigners to marry locals just to seek jobs here.

He also said the government would encourage owners of new buildings to set aside space for nurseries. It would appeal to the Federal government to give tax incentives to companies that have nurseries in their buildings.

"The Local Government and Housing Ministry and the Social Services Ministry will look into the establishment and running of the nurseries, potentially to be run by housewives," he added. -- BERNAMA