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Samy-Estate

MIC TO SUBMIT WORKING PAPER ON MONTHLY WAGE TO CABINET

KUALA LUMPUR, May 27 (Bernama) -- With no solution in sight after years of talks and bickering among plantation unions on the issue of monthly wage for estate workers, the MIC Central Working Committee (CWC) has decided to step in to "finish the job".

"I will not stop, and I will go on until we succeed," MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu told a news conference after chairing a three-hour CWC meeting at the party headquarters here today.

He said the party was preparing a working paper on the issue to be submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

"The time has come for the estate workers who have helped build this nation to get what they want -- a monthly salary and better housing facilities," he said.

Samy Vellu, who is Works Minister, said the Malaysian Agriculture Producers Association (MAPA) and the National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW) "can discuss the issue for another 20 years."

"But there must be a time limit. The MIC wants it to be decided faster," he said.

Asked if MAPA and NUPW have ever invited MIC representatives for discussions on the issue, Samy Vellu said: "We have nothing to do with their discussions. But we feel it is our duty to look into it."

On the working paper, Samy Vellu said it would be ready in a month's time.

"In the paper, I will argue on why monthly wage should be given to estate workers," he said.

He said the paper would not specify a minimum monthly salary for the workers but would cite cases where the monthly wage scheme has been implemented.

Samy Vellu said the National Land Finance Cooperative Society (NLFCS) was the first to introduce monthly wage for its 15 estates in January this year.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has suggested to him that the government should wait and see how the NLFCS scheme was faring before making a decision.

Samy Vellu said he found the NLFCS scheme to be working well after the first three months of implementation.

He said the MIC would also write to estate owners to convince them of the need to give monthly wage to their workers.

"We also appeal to them to continue to provide housing for their workers or provide loan facilities to buy a house," he said.

Samy Vellu also criticised estate owners for dragging their feet on the issue.

"If before, the colonial masters have taken our blood, this time the estate owners are doing just that. There is no difference."

He said there must be "some attitude of fairness in the minds of estate owners."

-- BERNAMA

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