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MTUC-Wage

MEF TOLD TO DO HOMEWORK BEFORE REJECTING MINIMUM-WAGE PROPOSAL

PETALING JAYA, June 24 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) should calculate the expenses incurred by an average family for basic needs before rejecting the proposed minimum RM900 salary for workers, the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) said today.

MTUC president Senator Zainal Rampak said the calculation should include payments for house rental, food, medicine, transport, children's schooling, clothing and utility bills.

"I want MEF to come up with the result. There is no need to include overtime payment and allowances or the rural-town factor. Just total it up and see how much it costs them (workers) from that salary alone," he told a media conference here.

He was commenting on MEF president Md Jaafar Abdul Carrim's statement in the newspapers today that the federation was standing firm in its opposition to MTUC's minimum-wage proposal and instead favoured productivity-based wage.

The report also quoted Md Jaafar as saying: "A national minimum wage policy is not practical nor applicable in Malaysia and should be best left to the industry and enterprise levels to decide."

Zainal said MEF should not just give excuses without studying the needs of a family.

"Don't just tell stories. If you (MEF) really have the back-up arguments, MTUC is ready to argue," he said.

He said a good minimum salary would inspire workers to work hard and contribute to increased productivity.

"MEF should also realise that the productivity of workers in the country is far higher than that of workers in other countries," he said.

In fact, at one workers symposium attended by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Japan not long ago, Japanese investors admitted that Malaysian workers' productivity was the second highest in Asia-Pacific after their Japanese counterparts, he said.

"For how long is MEF going to deny the fact that this claim is a fair one? They have never been serious about making a decision together," he said.

He said MTUC would send a memorandum on minimum wage laws to Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn on Monday.

"In our meeting with the minister, we will also propose that the National Labour Advisory Council and MEF be called to join discussions on this matter," he said.

-- BERNAMA

NHA YBY