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'Re-employment of civil servants should be fair and transparent'

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Cuepacs, while welcoming the decision to re-employ civil servants who have performed exceptionally, has called for the move to be fair and transparent.

Its president N. Sivasubramaniam said the extensions should not be done arbitrarily.

"We agree that there should be some form of selection because we cannot run away from the fact that there are plenty of lazy people working in the Government.

"We do not want the Government to employ these people after 55 as they will be a burden," he said.

He was commenting on a New Sunday Times report which quoted sources as saying that the Cabinet had decided against increasing the compulsory retirement age of civil servants.

However, the report said the Government will instead allow heads of department to recommend workers who can be re-employed based on their performance and need.

Sivasubramaniam said he hoped the Public Service Department would also consult the congress on the matter especially when drafting guidelines for heads of department on who should be recommended for extensions.

"We hope we will be allowed to give input during the National Joint Council meeting so that we can have a good scheme," he said.

Sivasubramaniam said the congress had also written to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for an appointment to further discuss the issue.

"We hope to meet the Prime Minister at the end of the month. We want to fine tune the proposal and have a more transparent system so that only the hardworking are given extensions to their services," he said.

Citing an example, he said, if the Government decided to offer extensions to those retiring at 55, it would incur more costs as apart from pensions, these workers would also have to be paid gratuity and salary.

"But if the Government gives its productive employees an option to continue until 58, it will only have to pay them salary and nothing else. They can defer the pension and gratuity payments until the employee reaches 58 years," he said.

Sivasubramaniam said the Government also need not worry about having to provide jobs for fresh graduates and school leavers who enter the labour market annually as recent trends showed that more people preferred to work in the private sector.

DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang said the proposal by the PSD that productive civil servants be given an additional three years to work for the Government after they retire at 55, should be made public.

He urged the Government to reconsider its decision.

He said the Government should take the issue seriously and urged the PSD to form a special committee to study this matter.

Lim said the move to give powers to heads of department to recommend staff whose services could be extended beyond 55 should also be studied to ensure there was no abuse of the system.

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