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Asean Labour Ministers meeting on May 10-11

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The 15th Asean Labour Ministers meeting, to be held on May 10 and 11, will among others, discuss measures to tackle the possible effects of the United States economic slowdown in the region.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said all 10 nations participating in the meeting were expected to be more pro-active when discussing the matter.

"One way or another, each and every Asean nation will feel the effects and its spillover," he said at a Press conference today.

He said just as how some multi-national companies were shutting down operations here and moving to Thailand, there were also others from Singapore which were doing the same and heading over here.

Fong said Malaysia was also expecting an influx of foreign workers during the slowdown period.

"Due to this possible effect, we have to take steps to safeguard our own workers' interests...all these would be raised at the meeting."8

He said Japan, South Korea and China's participation for the first time in the meeting as dialogue partners would focus on efforts to identify areas of technical cooperation in operationalising Asean projects.

"We seek to achieve a common position on the revision of the supervisory mechanism in the ILO, the ILO budget for 2001-2003 and the new instrument to be adopted by the conference on Occupational Safety and Health in Agriculture," he said.

"Another agenda would be to initiate projects that could result in enhancing human resources capabilities and create employment opportunities. A joint declaration will be issued at the end of the meeting," Fong said.

The meeting will be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

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