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Fong-Retirement

PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD ALSO EXTEND RETIREMENT AGE, SAYS MINISTER

MELAKA, March 18 (Bernama) -- The private sector should consider following the government's move to extend the retirement age of its workers beyond 55, Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said.

He said this was particularly true in the case of skilled workers in certain fields.

"I personally feel that it is beneficial to review the retirement age because the country is still short of skilled workers in certain sectors," he told reporters after opening a seminar on career and training opportunities which was organised by the Melaka MCA here last night.

Dr Fong said this when asked to comment on reports that the government has agreed in principle to extend the mandatory retirement age of civil servants from 55 to 56.

Cuepacs secretary-general Abdul Rahman Manan was quoted as saying that this decision was conveyed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Cuepacs leaders at a meeting on March 14.

Dr Fong said he had received appeals from several workers' unions in the private sector, including banks, to raise the retirement age of 55.

"The employers can discuss with the unions concerned the possibility of extending the retirement age," he said.

He said several neighbouring countries had raised the retirement age of workers in the public and private sectors, and this was a new phenomenon.

Dr Fong also urged Chinese youths not to regard government-sponsored skills training programmes as inferior to those conducted by the private sector.

"They think that these (government) programmes are the third or fourth choice for students whose academic results are not good. I urge them to discard such perceptions," he said.

Dr Fong said the misconception could be due to the fact that Chinese youths were not fully aware of the benefits of government-run training programmes.

"Apart from providing free facilities, government-run skills training programmes also offer a monthly allowance of RM45 to trainees," he said.

-- BERNAMA

NO YBY