

25 MAR 2002  
Cuepacs-SSB  
MATRIX LIKELY TO STAY BUT WITH IMPROVED VERSION

IPOH, March 25 (Bernama) -- Cuepacs' demand for the automatic scrapping of the matrix system may not be fruitful but it's confident the review of the New Remuneration Scheme (SSB) will still bring good news for the one million civil servants in the country.

Its president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said the Public Services Department (PSD) was not in favour of doing away with the three-tier salary scheme but was ready to improve it and reduce its weaknesses.

"We want the matrix system to be scrapped all together because it has caused so much confusion and dissatisfaction among civil servants. But the Government was not willing to accept our request," he told reporters after closing a parenting seminar here yesterday.

Despite that, Siva said Cuepacs would still pursue the matter during its discussions with the PSD before the Government made a final decision on the SSB.

Last week, Chief Secretary to the Government, Tan Sri Samsudin Osman said the PSD would resubmit its SSB review report to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad after the department and Cuepacs had fine-tuned it.

Dr Mahathir had directed the PSD to look into several matters in the initial report submitted to him because it would involve an estimated additional expenditure of RM1 billion.

Cuepacs has been asking the Government to abolish the SSB due to what it sees as anomalies in the system. It said the matrix system was outdated and wanted a single-layer system which would among others, stress efficiency and workers' productivity.

Siva said based on discussions with the PSD, Cuepacs was confident the review would provide better opportunities for civil servants in term of more promotions and salary adjustments.

"We are happy with the outcome during our preliminary discussions with the PSD. The problem is with the high cost involved as the Government does not want to be burdened with financial implications," he added.

He said Cuepacs affiliates had been asked to give feedback on the review and he was confident everything would be finalised by end of the year.

Siva also urged the Education Ministry to be more flexible in granting permission to teachers who want to go on optional retirement.

"Many teachers want to retire early for various reasons but they can't get permission from the ministry. There's no point holding teachers who are not keen to teach anymore or want to enter the private sector," he added.

At the moment, applications were scrutinised on a case-by-case basis and in some instance, the ministry had rejected applications from teachers who had recommendations from doctors.

"The ministry's reason is this is an essential service. But there are lots of people who are keen on becoming teachers now," he added.

Siva, who is also the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) secretary-general, said he hoped that the ministry would consider the appeal as its would benefit almost 300,000 teachers in the service.

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