

13 SEP 2003

Fong-Disabled

EMPLOYERS URGED TO PROVIDE MORE JOBS FOR THE DISABLED

SEREMBAN, Sept 13 (Bernama) -- Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said his ministry will use strong moral persuasion to encourage employers to provide more job training and opportunities for the disabled.

He said the ministry hoped to meet employers in two weeks to discuss the best methods of assisting the disabled to find employment.

"Currently there are some 10,000 disabled people who have registered with the Human Resources Ministry. The government have found jobs for a third of their number. This means there are still many more who are jobless.

"The 2004 Budget presented by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday breathed a new life for the disabled as the government has given more attention on and incentives for them," he told reporters after opening the Circuit II Malaysian Junior Judo Championship here today.

He urged more employers to be responsive to the plight of the disabled and emulate the government's move in setting aside one per cent of public service posts for them.

Dr Fong said the dialogue would attempt to identify problems faced by employers in hiring the disabled, including ensuring work places were disabled-friendly.

He said the feedback would enable the ministry to provide training and re-training programmes for the disabled.

He said a special division would be set up at each state office with an officer assigned to oversee the welfare of the disabled in the area.

On funds for skills development programmes, Fong said the ministry would set up a corporate body to manage the loans so that the private sector could access and utilise them more effectively.

He said the ministry had spent some RM200 million to produce skilled workers and aimed to train 50,000 people this year.

"We have blacklisted at least five training centres for abusing conditions by making false applications and submitting dubious names for the loans," Dr Fong said.

He said the ministry would monitor the situation closely and had tightened procedures in disbursing loans aside from ensuring the centres had adequate facilities and personnel so that they would not exceed their maximum capacity.

He said 10 more centres would be completed by the end of next year.

-- BERNAMA

RP EMK