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NAM-FONG

IMPROVE LABOUR MARKET AND HUMAN RESOURCE TO MOVE FORWARD, SAYS FONG

PETALING JAYA, Feb 23 (Bernama) -- Human Resource Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said that improvements in the labour market requirements and human resource development (HRD) are the only ways to move forward in facilitating trade and investment links among South-South countries.

Efficient flow of labour would facilitate such trade and investment links, he said in his paper entitled "The Human Factor in Forging Trade and Investment Links" at the Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM) Business Forum on South-South Cooperation here today.

As such, a proper system of recruitment in both the labour-sending and labour-receiving country would enable the respective authorities to curtail human smuggling and the employment of illegal workers who were vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation, Dr Fong said.

"Some form of harmonisation, if not standardisation, is needed in order to facilitate trade and investment links among South-South countries. This will enhance greater labour mobility and the sharing of information and experiences," he told the two-day forum which was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

He said that improvements in areas like bilateral payments systems, export and import customs procedures and double taxation agreements could also enhance these links.

Fong said that discussions on areas such as labour mobility and technical cooperation could be pursued through a framework agreement or memorandum of understanding which is mutually agreeable in participating countries.

Besides that a comprehensive and accurate labour market information database was necessary for the formulation of effective labour and employment policies.

In his paper, Dr Fong cited the shortage of skilled manpower as one of the critical problems faced by countries of the South that prevented the poor countries from catching up with the rich ones.

Therefore, he said that there was a need for technical cooperation and training to be done in the context of countries of the South-South, by expanding existing technical cooperation programmes. -- BERNAMA

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