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Move to get more jobs for the disabled in private sector

SEREMBAN, Sat. - The Human Resources Ministry will use "strong moral persuasion" on the private sector to provide more employment and training opportunities for the disabled.

Its Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said there were about 10,000 disabled workers registered with the ministry, of which only 3,000 were employed.

Although Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had announced a one per cent target of public service posts for the disabled, it was difficult to set similar targets for the private sector.

Speaking to reporters after officiating the Malaysian Youth Judo Championships (Circuit II) at the Seremban Parade shopping complex here today, Fong said his ministry was planning to have a dialogue with the private sector to find out their problems in hiring disabled workers.

"This is so we can provide additional training programmes for the disabled if need be. However, the ministry will continue to ensure that employers, both in the public and private sector, provide a disabledfriendly workplace."

The ministry would also set up a formal corporate body to manage the Skills Development Loan fund.

Fong said the interest rate for the fund had been reduced from four to two per cent.

The ministry would also discuss with the private sector the types of skills they needed so that it could channel funds towards specific training programmes. Some 50,000 people are expected to be trained in a variety of fields this year.

Fong said four or five training providers had been blacklisted by the ministry.

"Some discrepancies have been detected, and we will take the necessary action against those providers who have abused the conditions. Some of the discrepancies include using false applications, and not running the courses as specified.

"We will continue to monitor them. We are now very strict in terms of disbursement of loans."