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PRIME NEWS

Hope for jobless rural youth NST - 17/7/2013

BRIGHTER FUTURE: Govt to help 1 million unemployed or underemployed who are mostly school leavers

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THE government will be assisting some one million rural youth who are either underemployed or unemployed.

Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said most of them who were jobless were school dropouts and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia and Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia school leavers who did not have the opportunity to further

their studies.

"Some of them are unemployed and some are helping their families such as those from the indigenous groups who are helping their parents in the plantation sector because they do not have other employment opportunities.

"Some left school at Form Three and private companies did not want to take them because of a lack of qualifications.

"These are the groups we will help," he said after chairing a taskforce on rural transformation committee meeting here yesterday.

Shafie said there were 13 million youths in the country, of whom 3.4 million lived in rural areas. From the total, 2.4 million had jobs while one million were unemployed.

He said the ministry's empowerment strategy for youth included providing various initiatives via all the agencies which came under the ministry.

"The initiatives include expansion of access to training in high-value fields and boosting entrepreneurship.

"Youth who are involved or are interested in doing business

should be given the encouragement in the form of grants so that they can survive. Apart from this, the premises of Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Mara) will be rented out to them."

He said the ministry had introduced a Smart Village programme aimed at promoting rural cooperatives involving youth members.

"The creation of the Rural Transformation Centre plays a role because the youth can get more information about job opportunities through ICT facilities made available there."

Shafie said agencies under the ministry would provide training to youth who were unable to pursue their studies to ensure that they were qualified to work in the private sector.

"They will be given adequate training skills so that they will be accepted by companies."

With the training, youths can earn between RM3, 000 and RM4, 000 a month.

Shafie added all quarters should play their role to empower youth by introducing initiatives and job opportunities.