

7 THRUSTS FOR BETTER OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH

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OSH Master Plan aims to address new pandemic-induced work environment, says PM

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob has outlined seven strategic thrusts for occupational safety and health (OSH) amid an ever-changing work environment brought about by the pandemic.

He said the seven areas of focus were critical because a neglect of occupational safety and health could cause Malaysia to lose four per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) per year.

Ismail Sabri, who was speaking at the launch of the Occu-

pational Safety and Health Master Plan 2021-2025 (OSHMP25) yesterday, said such medium-term initiatives were drafted after taking into account changes in the current employment situation.

He said among other things, almost all homes, cafes and restaurants had been transformed into workspaces due to Covid-19.

The seven strategic thrusts are OSH empowerment in the public sector; strengthening the practice of self-regulation in the workplace; the promotion of OSH education and research; occupational health empowerment; increased OSH compliance in the small and medium enterprise sector; strengthening OSH through technology; and, increasing work-related road safety and OSH in the informal sector and future jobs.

"The seven strategic thrusts towards a safer work culture are crucial for all of us to adhere to.

"A direct effect of occupational safety and health neglect is the loss of four per cent of the country's GDP per year.

"However, the government's priority is to prevent the loss of lives of Keluarga Malaysia," he said at the launch of the master plan that was held virtually.

He said the seven strategic thrusts would drive the practice of a safe and healthy work culture, which would increase Malaysia's Wellbeing Index.

"This plan will boost safety and health at workplaces by reducing accidents, deaths and infections,

and help the government's effort in improving the people's wellbeing

"The government's commitment to protecting human resources is centred on the principles of inclusivity and a safe work culture.

"At the national level, implementation of long-term strategies of the

OSH management system is in line with the International Labour Organisation Convention 2006."

Elaborating on the OSHMP25, Ismail Sabri said the five-year medium-term plan was a continuation of previous plans and was aimed at applying inclusive values to encourage the participation of all parties, in line with the transformation of OSH systems nationwide.

"Moving forward, we must weather the global environment which is expected to become increasingly competitive as a result of this pandemic.

"It demands a transition in a drastic way to the new norms of work, such as working from home, with increased online activity."

He said this situation opened up many opportunities for the

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DATUK SERI ISMAIL SABRI YAAKOB

workforce, with the definition of a "workplace" becoming increasingly blurred as it was no longer necessary for employees to physically be at work.

"More and more will operate from home as more communications, meetings and financial transactions are done virtually."

However, Ismail Sabri said, this exposed employees to safety and health risks such as ergonomic problems linked to body posture while using computers or gadgets.

"Employees who are confined to the home for too long are also vulnerable to psychosocial problems, particularly stress and weaknesses in social interaction.

"The new situation also requires the government to look into affirmative action to ensure a healthy, safe and conducive working environment is continued."

Present at the event were Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri M. Saravanan, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali and Deputy Human Resources Minister Datuk Awang Hashim.