

**Najib Promises To Redouble Efforts To Improve Workers' Quality Of Life, Upgrade Job Skills**  
**Bernama**  
**30 April, 2013**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Tuesday night promised to redouble efforts to improve the quality of life of every worker in the country if the Barisan Nasional (BN) government is given a strong mandate in Sunday's general election to govern the nation.

He said the BN government would also ensure employment for every Malaysian wanting to work and provide ample access to them to upgrade their job skills in efforts to help increase their income.

"I and my colleagues will ensure the services and contributions of every worker are valued and appreciated by providing a conducive and congenial working environment for them and their families to lead a happy life in this blessed and beloved nation," he said in his Workers' Day message themed "Workers Catalyst for Nation's Transformation" aired over RTM tonight.

Najib said the 13 million Malaysian workers have many reasons to be thankful and grateful to God, among them, low unemployment rate in the country, only 3.3 per cent in January this year as compared to advanced nations like Spain, which registered 26.2 per cent, Euro Zone (12 per cent), France (10.7 per cent) the United States (7.9 per cent) and Australia (5.4 per cent).

In modernising labour laws, Najib said the government had amended provisions in the Workers' Social Security (Socso) Act 1969 to increase the age eligibility for Invalidity Pension Scheme from below 55 years' old to below 60 years' old to synchronise the age limit with the Minimum Retirement Age Act 2012.

The Minimum Retirement Age Act for the private sector to be enforced on July 1 will benefit some 300,000 private sector employees who have attained the age of 55 effective that date.

On the setting of the minimum wage for the private sector which had been enforced for employers with six workers and more on Jan 1 and on July 1 for employers having five workers, Najib said some 3.2 million workers nationwide would benefit from the minimum wages.

"In the long-term, the setting of the minimum wages will yield positive impact to the national economic transformation from being labour-oriented to capital-driven to contribute towards more high-skilled workers in this country," he said.

Najib said the extended retirement age and minimum wage implementation in the country would help bolster workers' savings in the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) to ensure the welfare and survival of the retirees were guaranteed.

Najib also said the government was reviewing the Industrial Relations Act 1967 and Private Employment Agencies' Act 1981.

He said the government had discussed proposed amendments to the Acts with trade unions

and employers' unions in efforts to reach a mutual understanding based on the tripartisme spirit.

"What I and my colleagues have done for Malaysian workers over the past four years are only a reflection of what is to come and implemented in the next five years.

"Improved welfare and well-being for more than 13 million Malaysian workers will be our guidance and priority to propel the nation forward," he added.

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