

**Government Has No Plans To Rush TPPA Implementation, Says Riot  
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KUCHING, Sept 13 (Bernama) -- The government has no plans to expedite the implementation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) amidst jitters from trade unions that it would be detrimental to the well-being of 12.5 million Malaysian workers, Human Resource Minister Datuk Richard Riot said Friday.

He said the matter had been discussed by the federal cabinet, which had already received inputs from the various government agencies, including labour issues from his ministry.

"As of last Wednesday's cabinet meeting, the government is not going to rush on the implementation of the TPPA.

"So there is nothing to fear because once it is signed, we have to ensure that nobody loses out," he told reporters after officiating at the closing of the Trade Union Training on Leadership and Raconteur (Tutelar) programme, organised by Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad (PSMB) in collaboration with the Trade Union Affairs Department here.

Responding to a recent statement by Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) president Khalid Atan urging the government to reject TPPA, he said, it had taken into consideration the views of not only the public sector but also the private sector, for which MTUC was only a small part.

Khalid had said feedback received by MTUC from friendly labour organisations in other countries, including the United States, showed that workers would be at the losing end as the big corporations' priority was dividends for shareholders.

He said the agreement would also sideline many International Labour Organisation's (ILO) conventions on workers rights that would expose Malaysian workers to exploitation and allow US firms to employ foreigners, that could suppress wages and delay the government's plan to turn Malaysia into a high-income nation by 2020.

However, Riot was confident that the government would achieve its target of 50 percent skilled workers out of the total workforce by then, from 28 percent at present through vocational and skill trainings being offered by the various agencies under his ministry.

He said PMSB spearheaded the up-skilling of Malaysian workforce by increasing the rate of financial assistance to 110 percent effective January 1 this year besides encouraging employers to retrain and upgrade the skills of their employees, apprentices and trainees in line with their business needs and country's development strategy.

Under the Tutelar programme, he said, trade union leaders were trained with communication and leadership skills to enable them to negotiate their collective agreement and settlement of industrial disputes competently and in an efficient manner.

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