

## **TPPA: Eight Labour Laws to Be Amended**

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 27 (Bernama) -- Eight labour laws will be amended to improve labour standards in the country after Malaysia finalised its participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).

Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Richard Riot said the laws were the Trade Unions Act 1959; Industrial Relations Act 1967; Employment Act 1955; Sabah Labour Ordinance (Chapter 67); Sarawak Labour Ordinance (Chapter 76); Private Employment Agencies Act 1981; Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act, 1990 and the Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act 1966.

"Malaysia needs to implement reforms and improvements in labour legislations in line with the high labour standards requirement, like other TPPA member countries.

"If Malaysia does not comply with the labour standards, it is likely to be prosecuted under the dispute settlement mechanism, in which case, it will be detrimental to Malaysia," he said when winding up the TPPA debate for his ministry at a special sitting of Dewan Rakyat Wednesday.

Riot, in his argument, also rejected the perception that the TPPA would lead to the influx of foreign workers, as the scope and discipline in the chapter on labour in the agreement did not contain any provision to encourage and improve the mobility of workers between the countries of TPPA, as had happened in the European Union.

"It aims to improve the welfare of workers and enforce rights of employees who work in Malaysia. The entry of foreign workers into TPPA countries are subject to the policies and laws set by the country itself," he said.

On the issue of foreign workers holding trade union offices, Riot admitted after the TPPA is signed, foreign workers will have the same rights as local workers, including becoming the leader of a union.

He said the ministry through the Department of Trade Unions Affairs was at the stage of amending the Trade Unions Act 1959 (Act 262) to fine-tune specific conditions to enable a foreign worker to be selected or appointed as an officer of a union.

"Among the conditions are requiring that a foreign worker should be legally employed for at least three years in Malaysia as contained in Article 10 of the Labour Consistency Plan (LCP), if he wants to be selected as an officer of a union," he said, adding the government would monitor the activities of trade unions especially those led by foreign workers.

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