

**Give Fair Consideration if Workers need to be Reduced – Najib  
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 18 (Bernama) -- The private sector in the oil and gas industry must give fair consideration to the welfare of the workers if they have to reduce the work force, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister said among the things that could be implemented was to give appropriate compensation to the workers to continue with life while looking for other jobs.

"What we must realise is that the demand for the oil and gas sector is beyond our control, these are external factors that we can't control.

"No government in the world can guarantee when a particular sector diminishes in terms of demand. (But)...we need to protect all workers," he said when replying to a supplementary question from Senator Khairiah Mohamed at the Dewan Negara sitting Monday.

Khairiah wanted to know how the government ensured that the welfare of the workers in that sector was protected and at the same time strengthen the country's oil and gas sector.

According to Najib, developed countries such as the United States of America and several multinational corporations such as BP, Shell and Exxon Mobil also had to reduce their work force.

Replying to a supplementary question from Senator Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Abdul Rahman concerning the long-term measures of the government in reducing the country's dependency on oil and gas revenue, Najib said the government had implemented measures to diversify sources of the country's revenue.

"As a comparison, in early 2009, the country's revenue from oil and gas exceeded 40 per cent, now it is about 21 per cent. Thus, the diversification measures had already shown results.

"In addition, we had to widen our tax base because only 10 per cent of the working people pay taxes. This means that out of the 13 million people who work, only 1.3 million pay tax," he added.

Najib said the government also implemented the Goods and Services Tax (GST) as a source

of income that could strengthen national revenue.

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