



MULTIPLE SKILLS A MUST, SAYS MEF

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PETALING JAYA — The workforce must be prepared to face the probability of job displacements and gain multiple skills.

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan described the call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution as “timely”, as employees are largely ill-prepared for the possibility that they could be laid off.

“It is time for us to get cracking as far as the digital economy is concerned and it is important for us to realise that there will be many people without jobs soon,” said Shamsuddin.

“We need to start preparing from now as we can see what happened to the banking industry in 2015, where some 18,000 workers were laid off because the banks adopted new financial technology.”

He said because the industry was ill-prepared, many were left jobless to this day or had become Uber or Grab drivers.

Shamsuddin said it was necessary to prepare the younger generation to face the future work scenario once they leave their formal education.

“We need to equip students with innovations and ensure they adapt in the new environment,” he said.

Shamsuddin urged workers to upgrade themselves by gaining multiple skills as well as certifying the skills they have gained on the job.

This was critical to increase the percentage of skilled workers in the country to 35 per cent by 2020.

“Many of our employees do not certify their skills through the Recognition of Prior Learning, which is a scheme that allows you to be certified based on your work experience,” he said.

“The scheme has been in place but it does not seem to excite workers. It is unfortunate that it is not given an importance whereas the employers are prepared to assist them.”

Malaysian Trades Union Congress president Abdul Halim Mansor called for companies to adopt an on-the-job certification scheme, with accreditation from the Human Resources Ministry, which would be similar to gaining vocational certifications.

The scheme had been adopted in many developed countries and should be emulated as it would encourage workers to continue developing themselves.

“This will enable our workforce to be exported to third world countries where Malaysia will have semi-professional workers with accredited certification,” he said.

“We also have to progress ourselves to be a multi-skilled workforce in order to become creative and innovativ.”

Abdul Halim said it was important for companies to set up their own research and development divisions to keep up with the current technological advancements in the workforce industry in light of the fourth revolution.