Govt to have 5 million highly skilled workers in 5 years - Subramaniam

PUTRAJAYA: The government targets to raise to five million over the next five years the number of highly skilled workers now standing at 3.1 million among the 12 million workers in the country, Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam said yesterday.

"This means that every year we have to convert about 360,000 non-skilled workers into highly skilled workers or create that number of highly skilled workers. This is a challenge for the government in making Malaysia a high-income nation," he told reporters after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) among the Skills Development Department, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (Unirazak) and the Vocational Education Training Academy (Veta), here.

Subramaniam said the ministry would collaborate with the Higher Education Ministry to enable holders of the Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) to pursue education at diploma and degree levels at all polytechnics in the country.

He said the ministry, through its skills institutes, would provide training at certificate level or to acquire the SKM.

"In principle, the Higher Education Ministry is agreeable to this and we will implement it soon. This effort will assist the country to produce creative and innovative skilled manpower," he said.

Subramaniam said SKM holders would be accepted into the civil service scheme and allowed to pursue studies up to tertiary level.

In this connection, he said the ministry, through the Skills Development Department, would have to forge cooperation with the institutions of higher learning and local and foreign certification authorities.

"This is to give wider opportunities to SKM holders to secure employment, raise their employability, develop their career or pursue further studies," he said. - Bernama