

Socso may up members' rates

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Social Security Organisation (Socso) is reviewing monthly contributions from its members and may revise the rates as its pension payouts are likely to exceed collection, said Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam yesterday.

If there was an increase in rates, more services and facilities might be included for workers who seek compensation.

At present, Socso collects RM2 billion a year and out of that, RM1.5 billion is paid to 180,000 people under its invalidity and survival pension scheme.

The pension scheme compensates workers for life suffering from a permanent disability or accident during, and after, working hours.

The balance, he added, went to

support workers undergoing dialysis or to buy leg brace, among other items.

"The pension payouts are higher than our collection because more Malaysians are living longer.

"Our highest payout is for survival pension scheme, which comes up to RM950 million a year. We have been cross-subsidising to pay survivors from our other schemes. We will try to make out, but if we can't, then we will review the rates."

Dr Subramaniam was speaking after opening the 14th Occupational Safety and Health conference and exhibition themed "Empowerment, Accountability and Responsiveness" yesterday.

He said the ministry would try to control the payouts, but "we might need to increase the contributions, which we are reviewing now".

He said Malaysia had one of the lowest Socso contributions in the

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Social Security Organisation

RM2b
collected

RM1.5b
paid out

world compared to other welfare state countries, which make it mandatory for workers to pay 20 to 30 per cent of their income.

"But they have more facilities. Our rates are low, but we have a good protection scheme, especially for accident victims."

An employee pays 0.5 per cent of salary under Invalidity Pension scheme while an employer pays 0.5 per cent for the same scheme and an additional 1.25 per cent for Survival Pension. The ceiling for both contributions is capped at RM3,000.

However, he said with the ever changing working environment, new items and services needed to be included. He said Socso was receiving various work hazard complaints from workers, including for back pain.

"For instance, a lady involved in farming or rubber tapping for 20 years, complains about severe back pain. She says it is occupation in-

duced pain. Do we allow her to seek compensation, because then, everyone with back pain will seek compensation."

He said Socso was looking at new challenges faced by workers in its review to be announced next year.

The ministry, which mandated a Occupational Safety and Health committees for all companies with more than 40 workers last year, said it was happy with the compliance rate.

"So far, 80 per cent of the companies have implemented it. It is one way to empower workers to give their input on safety to employers to reduce accidents."

However, he said the work safety culture was still very much confined to meetings, conferences, posters and signboards as "in reality, people still do not implement it. We still have construction workers refusing to secure their helmets or wear a mask before spraying chemicals".