

Zurich Malaysia in partnership with the Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management held the inaugural “People Business 2017 – A Forum Designed for Impact”

Renowned HR experts and industry leaders discussed current and trending issues affecting employee benefits and corporate wellness in Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur, 5 October 2017 – In today’s recruitment market, a competitive compensation and benefits package is essential for attracting and retaining the best talents in any organisation. More employers are recognising the importance of diversifying their **Employee Benefits (EB)** offerings to provide a greater sense of security for its workforce, in an effort to drive better employee engagement and increase productivity levels.

In view of this, Zurich Insurance Malaysia Berhad together with its sister company Zurich Takaful Malaysia Berhad (Zurich Malaysia), partnered the Malaysian Institute of Human Resource (MIHRM) to organise **“People Business 2017 – A Forum Designed for Impact”**, an inaugural forum that fosters discussion on the current issues affecting EB in the country, especially on the **value of corporate wellness** as well as the highly debated implementation of the **Employment Insurance System (EIS)**.

Approximately 200 HR practitioners and industry professionals attended the forum to hear nine (9) renowned HR experts and prominent industry leaders discuss and share their insights on the two topics.

Present to welcome distinguished speakers and participants was **Mukesh Dhawan, General Manager of Life Insurance, Zurich Insurance Malaysia Berhad**, who also shared his sentiments on the purpose of organising the forum. “At Zurich, we are in the “people business”. We are committed to help our customers understand and protect themselves from risks by providing insurance solutions that cater to their needs. People Business 2017 is a testament to how employee benefits are an important element in driving organizational performance in today’s dynamic business environment. Together with MIHRM, we organised this forum to foster

knowledge-sharing and networking between HR practitioners and industry professionals, so that we can learn from one another and work hand-in-hand to develop more robust employee benefit solutions for the industry.”

The first topic of the forum was the “**Value of Corporate Wellness**” within an organisation. The panellists for this topic were:

- i. **Ms Susheela Ramasamy, Head of Talent Acquisition - Gamuda Berhad**
- ii. **Ms Florence Tan, Senior Manager of Corporate Responsibility - PwC Malaysia**
- iii. **Mr Daryll Tan, Co-Founder and Director - OpenMinds**
- iv. **Adriad Choo, HR and Admin Director - Puratos Malaysia**

Key issues that were discussed included advantages and disadvantages of incorporating wellness programmes into an EB package, ways for employers to present corporate wellness as a highly valued benefit and how such programmes can improve a company’s health score cards. The panelists agreed that corporate wellness should be sustainable, extending beyond programmes to form part of the company’s culture. While current corporate wellness initiatives generally cover the physical, mental and emotional health of employees, there is also a growing trend to incorporate financial wellness such as organizing financial literacy talks for their workforce.

The forum later continued on with its second topic, “**EIS, What’s Your Say?**” which is currently one of the many issues concerning EB in the country. The **EIS**, primarily aimed at providing financial assistance to retrenched employees who are looking for a new job, is said to benefit about 6.5 million workforce in the private sector. However, there have been concerns raised by employers as well as industry bodies on the fact that EIS will add to the cost of doing business and be an added burden to the workforce.

The five panelists who shared their views and opinions on this topic were:

- i. **En Rizal Nainy, Deputy Chief Executive Officer 1 - SME Corporation**
- ii. **Datuk Michael Kang, National President - SME Association of Malaysia**
- iii. **Ms Malar Villi, Emotional Intelligence Specialist -
Hearts and Minds Development Centre**
- iv. **Mr Iskasymir Ismail, Acting President - KL International
Chamber of Commerce**
- v. **Pn Norfaeizah Arshad, Chief Human Resource Officer - Zurich Malaysia**

The second half of the forum highlighted the current progress and challenges regarding the development of EIS in the country. While the highly debated topic was met with mixed opinions, the panellists agreed that EIS in principal will be able to provide financial relief to retrenched employees. However, employers should work closely with the regulators and industry associations to upskill and reskill their workforce so that they remain relevant in the face of a globalised economy.

The discussion for both topics was moderated by Dr Henry Yeoh, Deputy President of MIHRM.

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