EMPLOYMENT of local workers should always be the priority for any government in power.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Shamsuddin Bardan said local workers should be equipped with certified skills to ensure they meet the requirements of the labour market.
He added increasing the cost of employing foreign workers is a short term solution.

“If we are able to certify the skills of local employees, they can multitask. Productivity will be enhanced and reliance on foreign workers can be limited to sectors not attractive to local workers,” he told The Malaysian Insight.

Shamsuddin was responding to Pakatan Harapan’s (PH) manifesto (https://www.themalaysianinsight.com/s/41545/) which was launched yesterday.

Among the key promises the opposition coalition wants to implement within its first term in office is to prioritise locals and reduce the number of foreign workers in the country. Link:

To ensure productivity of local workers and also increase their employability, Shamsuddin said employers should be given more incentives to introduce new technologies in the workforce.

“Employers need to invest in modern technology. With new technology and skilled employees, workers will be more productive and may be rewarded on their productivity,” he said.

He also said employers who only employ locals should be given tax incentives to further encourage them to halt intake of foreign workers.

Meanwhile, Malaysia Trade Union Congress (MTUC) secretary-general J Solomon said employers need to have the “Malaysian First” policy.

“There must be a political will in curbing the flow of foreign workers.
“Both parties should be promoting the Malaysian First Policy,” he said.

Solomon added a higher levy should be imposed on employers who recruit foreign workers.

There should also be a ban on intake of migrant workers for service industries.

When asked about the coalition’s proposed increase on the minimum wage to RM1,500, Solomon said it is not enough.

“The reality is 58% of the B40 comprises private sector workers. Private sectors are in dire need to live a decent life which is not happening despite the government’s assurance the economy growth is good.

“To genuinely elevate the B40 of the private sector workers, they need more than RM1,500,” said Solomon.

He added employers should not expect a quality worker with insufficient minimum wage.

“If employers treat workers with dignity the workers will in return provide the productivity expected by the employer,” he said.

PH had said it will take 100 days for it to put into place the 10 major policy changes in its manifesto if it forms the government in the 14th general election.

The PH “Buku Harapan” or “Book of Hope”, is divided into five main sections – reducing the people’s burden and cost of living, reforming institutions and policies, spurring a sustainable economy, giving rights to Sabahans and Sarawakians according to the Malaysia Agreement 1963 and creating a moderate and inclusive Malaysia. – March 9, 2018.