Mandatory creches may attract more female staff

MULLED: It may be made compulsory for private firms and govt departments to set up nurseries, says Najib

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday said measures like making it mandatory for private companies and government departments to provide daycare centres might be considered to increase the number of women in the workforce.

He said many women had left the workforce for various reasons.

“We have set a target of having 59 per cent of women in the workforce. Thus, we should consider making it compulsory to set up nurseries and creches at the workplace to get more women to stay on in their jobs,” he said yesterday when witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Women Entrepreneurship and Professional Development Adviser Office (KIW) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia here.

Currently, the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry encourages companies to set up such facilities at their premises.

In 2013, it was reported that there were 111 companies operating daycare centres which were registered with the ministry. However, only 27 are from the private sector.

The prime minister also said Malaysia wanted to see more women decision-makers, especially in public-listed companies.

In this regard, he said, one should consider matching those by KIW with companies that were looking for women to sit on their board of directors.

KIW, Najib said, had trained 900 women to have the relevant skills to be company directors.

He also called on women entrepreneurs to adopt a “breakout strategy” to expand their small-scale businesses.

He said the government hoped to see more women entrepreneurs expanding their businesses at regional and global levels.

“There must be a breakout strategy adopted by women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses. Many are in the small- and medium-sized industries,” he said.

Present at the event yesterday were Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, KIW adviser Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and UKM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali.

The MoU aims to build a smart partnership to drive women entrepreneurs and professionals to greater heights by giving them exposure to concepts, techniques and innovative ideas.