

MAHATHIR - HOUSING

BM

PULAU PINANG, SEPT 20 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD) SAID TODAY THAT THE PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDE IF THE NATION'S HOUSING PROBLEM ESPECIALLY HOUSING FOR THE LOWER INCOME GROUP, IS TO BE RESOLVED.

HE SAID THE PEOPLE SHOULD ALSO BE WILLING TO LEAVE BEHIND THEIR VILLAGE LIFESTYLE FOR MODERN HIGHRISE ACCOMMODATION IN VIEW OF THE SHORTAGE OF LAND.

THE PRIME MINISTER WHO WAS OPENING A HOUSING PROJECT OF THE SUNGAI ARA KOPERASI MUDA AT SUNGAI NIBONG KECIL, STRESSED THAT LAND SHOULD NOT BE SQUANDERED THROUGH THE BUILDING OF DETACHED OR DOUBLE-STOREY HOUSES.

HE SAID THAT UNDER THE FOURTH MALAYSIA PLAN, ABOUT ONE MILLION HOUSES WOULD BE BUILT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE ADDED, WOULD UNDERTAKE A LARGE PORTION OF THESE HOUSING PROJECTS, AND THE PRELIMINARY ALLOCATION HAD BEEN PROVIDED AND INFRASTRUCTURE WORK STARTED. -- MORE 1930/AH

MAHATHIR-HOUSING 2 PULAU PINANG

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO OUTLINED SOME PROBLEMS FACED BY BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN DEVELOPING HOUSING PROJECTS, AND THESE PROBLEMS WOULD TAKE TIME TO RESOLVE.

AMONG THE PROBLEMS, HE SAID, WERE THE IMPOSITION OF CONDITIONS THAT WERE DIFFICULT TO FULFIL, DELAYS IN PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS BY HOUSING DEVELOPERS AND THE RE-LOCATION OF OCCUPANTS LAND REQUIRED FOR HOUSING.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IN A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY LIKE MALAYSIA, HE DID NOT WANT TO SEE THE PEOPLE SEGREGATED BY RACE IN JOBS, LIFESTYLE AND HOUSING -- A COMPARTMENTALIZATION WHICH THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY WAS TRYING TO OVERCOME.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO SEE ALL THE RACES LIVING TOGETHER IN THE URBAN OR RURAL AREAS, AND TO FOSTER A HEALTHY REALATIONS AMONG THEMSELVES THROUGH INTERMINGLING.

-- MORE 2007/LK

N127:

MAHATHIR-HOUSING 3 PULAU PINANG

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: "IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE WANT A PORTION OF BUMIPUTRAS TO RESIDE IN THE URBAN AREAS BUT A LARGE NUMBER OF THEM COULD NOT AFFORD THE HOUSES IN THE URBAN AREAS."

THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WAS TRYING TO PROVIDE HOUSING FOR BUMIPUTRAS IN THE URBAN AREAS SUCH AS SQUATTERS AND TO SELL LAND TO THOSE WHO COULD AFFORD TO BUY.

HE STRESSED THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS THAT SOME STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE ISSUED LAND TITLES TO A GROUP OF BUMIPUTRAS WHO COULD AFFORD THE LAND.

"UNFORTUNATELY, SOMETIMES THERE WERE OUTCRIES THAT THIS MOVE SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AND THE LAND HAD BETTER BE GIVEN TO SQUATTERS OR FOR LOW COST HOUSING," HE ADDED.

HE SAID THAT IF LOW COST HOUSING WAS TO BE REALLY SET UP IN THESE LAND, THEN BUMIPUTRAS WOULD ONLY BE FOUND IN THE LOW COST HOUSES, LEADING THEM TO ENVY THE OTHER RACES.

-- MORE 2010/LK

MAHATHIR - HOUSING 4 PULAU PINANG

HE SAID IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT SOME STATE GOVERNMENTS HAD ISSUED LAND TITLES IN THE TOWNS TO SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICERS WHO COULD AFFORD THEM.

TAKING A RECENT CASE IN NEGERI SEMBILAN AS AN EXAMPLE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN A PIECE OF LAND OPPOSITE THE GOLD COURSE IN SEREMBAN TO ABOUT 200 TO 300 BUMIPUTRAS AND A FEW NON-BUMIPUTRAS.

THE NEGERI SEMBILAN GOVERNMENT HAD SOLD THE LAND IN 1973 AND THEREFORE, THE PRICE, AT THAT TIME, WAS NOT REALLY CHEAP AS CLAIMED BY SOME PEOPLE TODAY.

AND BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY TOOK TIME TO CLEAR THE SALE OF THE LAND UNTIL THIS YEAR, THE SITUATION LED TO ACCUSATIONS OF MALPRACTICES, HE ADDED. -- MORE 2026/AH

MAHATHIR - HOUSING 5 PULAU PINANG

THE MATTER HAD BEEN INVESTIGATED AND IT WAS FOUND THAT THERE WERE NO MALPRACTICES AND THE AWARD OF THE LAND WAS IN LINE WITH STATE GOVERNMENT PRACTICE OF GIVING BUMIPUTRAS LAND IN PREMIUM AREAS.

THERE WAS NO CAUSE FOR ENVY AND UNJUSTIFIED ACCUSATIONS, HE ADDED.

THE ALTERNATIVE WAS OFFERING THE LAND TO SQUATTERS WHO COULD NOT AFFORD IT ANYWAY OR THE SETTING UP OF LOW-COST HOUSING ON EXTREMELY VALUABLE PREMIUM LAND IN TOWN CENTRES.

HE STRESSED THAT IT WAS THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE PLACES FOR SQUATTERS, NOT ONLY IN SEREMBAN BUT ALSO IN OTHER TOWNS IN LINE WITH WHAT THEY COULD AFFORD.

BUT SOMETIMES THE GOVERNMENT FACED IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS BY THE SQUATTERS SUCH AS DETACHED HOUSES OR TERRACE HOUSES.

HE SAID SQUATTERS SHOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT LIVING IN FLATS OR SIMILAR HIGH-RISE ACCOMMODATION TO AVOID WASTAGE OF LAND SPACE IN TOWN AREAS. -- MORE 2030/AH

N133

MAHATHIR - HOUSING 6 PULAU PINANG

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR REASONED THAT IF KAMPUNG-STYLE HOUSES WERE TO BE BUILT IN CITY CENTRES FOR PEOPLE WHO WISHED TO RETAIN THEIR KAMPUNG LIFE-STYLE, THERE WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH LAND TO GO ROUND FOR AN INCREASING SQUATTER POPULATION.

THE CHANGING TIMES CALLED FOR A CORRESPONDING CHANGE IN ATTITUDE.

HE STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT GUARANTEE A HOUSE FOR EVERY FAMILY BECAUSE THIS WAS AN IMPOSSIB

E CONDITION AS LAND SHORTAGE WOULD BECOME MORE ACUTE WITH EVERY INCREASE IN THE POPULATION.

ALSO PRESENT WERE ACTING CHIEF MINISTER OF PULAU PINANG DATUK ABDUL RAHMAN ABBAS, MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT DATUK ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI AND STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICERS. -- BERNAMA 2036/AH