

Dr M: We

will

consider

fund (P)

## proposal

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — The Government will consider positively a proposal to establish a revolving fund to help ex-servicemen and their families, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said he could not give immediate approval to the proposal by the Malaysian Ex-servicemen's Association, as a decision had to be made by the Government.

Speaking at a gathering of ex-servicemen and their families at Stadium Negara, the Prime Minister said the fund would be helpful to ex-soldiers and their families.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who also attended the gathering, told newsmen later that the Ministry had completed a working paper on the proposed fund.

The paper, a result of several meetings between the Association and the ministry, would be submitted to the Cabinet for its evaluation soon.

Discussions would be held first with Bank Negara and the Treasury.

Najib said the Government would then decide if there was a need to set up the fund or to use the existing funds allocated to the Ministry.

He said if the Government chose to utilise the existing fund, a specific allocation had to be set aside for the ex-soldiers.

"However, it is still premature to specify the amount as we have to discuss with the central agencies involved," he added.

Najib said several proposals on ways to utilise the services of ex-soldiers after they completed their services with the force have also been incorporated in the paper.

He said the ministry and Government only provided training and looked after the welfare of soldiers when they were still in service.

"When they retire, the association undertakes the responsibility to look after their welfare. However, due to insufficient funds, many ex-servicemen are neglected," he said, adding that the Government would study ways to address this problem.

On the possible extension of the Malaysian Battalion (Malbatt) services in Cambodia once the UN peace-keeping duty in the country ends in November, Najib said a decision would only be made if the Cambodian Government submitted its request to Malaysia.