

09 NOV 1996

Land-Ramli

LIBERALISATION PROPOSED TO GO ABOUT DEVELOPING MALAY RESERVE

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 9 (Bernama) -- Liberalisation has been proposed in going about the problems relating to efforts to develop Malay reserve without affecting its ownership status.

Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, in proposing this, said the development of such land could be implemented through privatisation or by the state or federal government agencies.

State governments need to hold direct discussion with corporations especially those owned by Malays for the development of Malay reserve, he said in his keynote address at a conference on the development of Malay reserve at the Putra World Trade Centre, here today.

"The government need to help arrange companies to develop the land while ensuring higher returns to land owners," he said.

Ramli also suggested that state governments set up a share holding body to hold onto unsold premises in Malay reserve which had been developed.

He said a revolving fund should also be set up to finance these assets.

The state governments need to identify Malay reserve, owned or otherwise, having the potential for development.

Among the main factors hindering the development of Malay reserve were capital and expertise making the price of the land much lower than the market price, he said.

Ramli also referred to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed's speech at the recent Umno General Assembly where he said the preservation of Malay reserve showed that the Malays were still weak and were not the masters in their own country.

As such, Ramli said the Malays need to change their view and paradigm relating to Malay reserve which they had been proud of.

"Malays need to be liberal and not conservative by being proud of owning land although undeveloped," he said.

Ramli said there were some 4.5 million hectares of Malay reserve when it was gazetted in 1913 by the British colonialists under the Malay Reservation Enactment.

Since then, he said many Malay reserve had its status changed to pave way for development projects but was not replaced by the state governments because the scarcity of land.

To-date, the size of the Malay land including Malay reserve as well as its value could not be exactly ascertained, he said, adding that the general assumption was that it continued to be depleted as the results of among others change in ownership.

In this respect, he said there was a need for detailed study and maybe it would reveal something surprising.

The one-day conference jointly organised by the Perak government and the Economic Faculty of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) was attended by some 400 participants including district officers, land and mines officers, elected representatives and academicians. -- BERNAMA

JM ABG