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Call to step up tree-planting campaign

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ALL local authorities in Selangor have been urged to give priority to the tree-planting campaign because the State is way behind in achieving its target for the year.

State Local Authorities, Urbanisation and Squatters Committee chairman Datuk Fuad Hassan said he could not recall the total number of trees which had been planted by all local authorities in the State but said it was only about 20 per cent of the target.

Fuad said this to reporters after officiating at the Selangor State Development Corporation Third Flats Sports Championship at the PKNS Sports Complex in Kelana Jaya, Petaling Jaya last Saturday.

Also present was PKNS general manager Datuk Harun Salim.

It was reported that Selangor aimed to plant 80,000 trees this year in conjunction with the nationwide tree-planting campaign which was launched in Gombak last March by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Asked why the achievement was so poor, Fuad said most of the local authorities had other matters to be given priority to.

"The local authorities have other priorities and they have to decide between whether to plant trees or repair broken drains, for example," he said.

Insufficient allocation for the programme, especially in district councils, was another reason.

"Most of the district councils have no budget for the project but this reason does not apply to the municipal councils," he said.

No matter what the reason, Fuad said the tree-planting campaign had to be continued and all the local authorities involved had been asked to step up their efforts.

"Plant more trees and do not cut trees unnecessarily," he said.

Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh was reported on Nov 5 as saying that only three States nationwide had succeeded in meeting more than 50 per cent of targeted number of trees planted this year.

Selangor was one of the States which he said failed to meet less than 30 per cent of its target.

The Minister's statement was, however, refuted by several Menteri Besar who said that miscommunication was the reason why the Ministry could not match the figures achieved by the remaining States.

Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar was quite surprised to note that Selangor was not listed because he believed that the response towards the campaign was very good.

He, however, did not provide any statistics but instead said that Fuad would look into it.

The campaign received very good response from local authorities in Selangor. The Ampang Jaya Municipal Council was reported last month to have planted 8,116 trees since March and planned to plant more than 10,000 trees this year.

Meanwhile, Selayang Municipal Council president Kasjoo Kadis was reported in June as saying that the council had allocated RM400,000 for tree-planting exercises.

The Petaling Jaya Municipal Council was reported to have allocated RM500,000 for its landscaping programme and under the plan, 10,000 trees will be planted under the first phase of the project and 30,000 trees by

the year 2000. As for the Subang Jaya Municipal Council, it planned to plant 10,000 trees by 2000.

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