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Plan to build dormitories to solve squatter woes

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Government is studying a proposal to build dormitories for low-income workers to ease the squatter problem.

A squatter census being carried out by the authorities would help the ministry ascertain the number of single working squatters, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh said today.

"Only then can we decide whether it is viable to implement the proposal," he told a post-Cabinet meeting Press conference at his office.

Ting said data from the census would give authorities a clear picture of the squatter problem in the city and take steps to solve it.

The census, he said, would help the authorities register squatters in the Klang Valley.

Ting said the study on the viability of the proposal would include aspects like rental rates and location of the dormitories.

The construction of the dormitories was one of several suggestions made during a meeting last December to solve squatter problems in the city.

The other notable suggestion made at the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was buying low-cost houses from the private sector and renting it out.

Ting said while squatters have increased over the years, the problem in Kuala Lumpur was still bearable compared to that faced by other rapidly growing cities in the region.

Asked if the move was in preparation for the Commonwealth Games next year, Ting said this was not so.

"It is only a matter of time before we have to solve this problem."

Ting urged landowners to be vigilant over their land to ensure that squatters do not illegally occupy the land.

He assured relocated squatters that they would be treated justly and will either be paid compensation or given priority in allocation of low cost houses, including those built by the Government.

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