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Ting: National tree-planting target likely to be achieved

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Housing and Local Government Ministry is confident that the National Tree-Planting Campaign will meet its first-year target of 750,000 trees.

Its minister, Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh, called on all parties concerned to redouble efforts at greening the environment as the latest progress report submitted by all States showed the campaign had achieved 57 per cent of the target for the first year.

He said based on the report, the overall response to the project was encouraging and there had been an improvement on the number of trees planted by the States.

The figure, he said, did not include commercial tree planting which included millions of trees.

"According to the report, as at Nov 8, 427,689 trees had been planted nationwide.

"Therefore, to meet the target of 20 million trees by 2020, all Malaysians must play their part," said Ting.

Speaking after the prize presentation ceremony for the National Landscaping and Cleanliness competition, he said Perlis, Johor, Kedah and Pahang had even exceeded the target.

Ting was reported on Nov 5 as saying that only three States nationwide had met more than 50 per cent of the targeted number.

The minister, who was dismayed with some State Governments which had showed no concern for the tree-planting campaign, had asked the States to give explanations for their failure to meet the target as well as file reports every three months on the progress of the campaign.

But after the ceremony today, Ting said the apparent poor show reported earlier was due to the States not filing reports when asked to do so by the National Landscape Department.

In view of this, he said local authorities must step up its monitoring activities and co-ordinate a more comprehensive programme for the campaign.

He said the nationwide tree-planting campaign, launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on March 3, should be viewed by everyone as a joint effort among the Government, voluntary organisations, the private sector and the people.

Ting said RM200 million was allocated under the Seventh Malaysia Plan for the landscaping and greening programme.

Out of this figure, RM110 million is for landscaping works and planting of trees.

"Since early last year, we have used 10 per cent of the RM110 million for landscaping and planting trees in areas such as public parks, riverbanks, near beaches, on government land along roads and in housing estates," he said.

Earlier, Ting said the National Landscaping and Cleanliness competition had created public awareness on cleanliness and beautifying the environment.

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