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HDA hails PM's call to cut red tape in civil service

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat.- The Housing Developers Association today supported the Prime Minister's statement on the need to revamp the civil service to reduce red tape.

HDAM president Eddy Chen Lok Loi said the building industry had to go through 30 to 40 approval processes, which could take two to six years.

Yesterday, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the revamp was to reduce red tape which could delay the approval of applications urgently needed to revive the economy.

He said government employees could no longer operate at the current pace given the present economic situation and that the Government relied on the private sector for funds to finance its expenditure and development.

Dr Mahathir also said that without the private sector to pay taxes, the Government would not have enough funds to fulfil its obligations.

Chen said during good times the housing sector paid about RM1 billion in taxes to the Government.

"This does not include taxes paid by 140 other linkage industries which enjoy spin-offs from housing and construction."

The association also called for transparency in the approval processes as ambiguity could cause applications to be rejected unnecessarily.

He added that the housing sub-sector in the building industry employed about 750,000 workers or 8.6 per cent of the country's workforce. Chen also touched on the likelihood of retrenchment if the current economic situation deteriorated over the next one to two years.

Meanwhile, Datuk Mohd Zain Majid, executive director of the Malaysian Employers' Federation, said the need to speed up approval had been a long-time objective of the Government.

"It is good the Prime Minister is reinforcing it now as we are all mindful delays are detrimental to economic recovery."

Malaysian Trades Union Congress president Zainal Rampak proposed one-stop centres to cut delays and clear guidelines for civil servants.

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