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Water Council to meet on June 29

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INTER-state water transfer, the strategy to overcome the water problem as well as the role and objective of National Water Council will be the main agenda of the Council's inaugural meeting this Monday.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said two working papers will be tabled at the meeting to be chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. "The first paper will explain the necessity to establish the National Water Council, what role it will play and how it will tackle the water problem.

"The second paper will touch on various water sources available in the country, based on a study conducted by a consultant," Samy Vellu told reporters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, when asked about the agenda of the Council's first meeting.

Samy Vellu said the second working paper to be tabled at the meeting will explain the causes of the water shortage, identify which states have surplus water reserves and which are high water users.

"We will also discuss on how to transfer water from states with abundant water supply to those without adequate supply," he added.

Asked about the sale of water between states, Samy Vellu said the Council will buy water from one state and sell to another state.

"We will fix the payment ... (The inter-state water sale) won't be against the existing law. And we don't have any intention to amend the existing law," he said.

Samy Vellu had earlier reiterated that the Council will not take over the rights of water management from any state but will assist states affected by water shortage to get supply from those with surplus water.

He said during the meeting, the ministry will explain that the Council will only act as a body to co-ordinate the transfer of water supply between states. The meeting, which will be held at the Prime Minister's Department, will be attended by all Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers.

The Council, the establishment of which have been approved by the Cabinet on April 29, will formulate a long-term strategy to ensure sufficient water supply for the country for the next 25 years.

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