

07/10/1999

Ting on the poor response to tree planting campaign

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - State governments' response to the national tree planting campaign has waned since the beginning of the year.

Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh said today that this was contrary to the promising response recorded over the last two years.

The poor response had cast doubts on whether the target of three million trees by next year could be achieved.

"We have achieved only 63.8 per cent of our target for the year 2000 and if efforts are not intensified, we fear we may not meet the three million trees target," he told reporters after chairing his ministry's post-Cabinet meeting today.

He said that nearly 1.9 million trees had been planted since the launch of the campaign in March 1997 until June this year.

This is the third time the minister expressed dissatisfaction over the progress of the campaign which was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The campaign is part of the Government's efforts to make Malaysia a "Garden Nation".

Ting said the national target each year was 750,000 trees from which a total of 575,572 were planted in 1997 and 1,117,652 last year.

"We managed encouraging results last year and even exceeded the target with help from the private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations," he said.

However, he said for the first six months of this year, only 220,794 trees were planted and he did not expect an improvement in the second half of the year based on these figures.

He said response from eight States had been encouraging with each exceeding 50 per cent of their respective targets for the three-year period.

Perak achieved 81 per cent per cent, Perlis (55.3 per cent), Selangor (57.1 per cent), Pahang (76.8 per cent), Negri Sembilan (54.5per cent) and Johor, the highest with 103 per cent.

He said the States with the lowest number of trees planted were Sabah (19 per cent), Kelantan (28.3 per cent) and Wilayah Persekutuan (38.8 per cent).

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