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Flood woes: Joint efforts needed

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KLANG, Sun. - Selangor must work with Kuala Lumpur on remedial measures and flood mitigation projects to put an end to flood woes affecting them, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo said today.

"The Federal Territory and Selangor cannot be separated as the drainage system links both. They must jointly undertake remedial measures, otherwise the problem of flooding will never end," he said.

He fully agreed with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi that poor development planning and inefficient maintenance caused the flooding in Kuala Lumpur and certain parts of Selangor.

Dr Mohd Khir said it was time the relevant ministries and departments seriously looked into this.

"It's better to take preventive measures than to wait for something serious to happen before acting," he told reporters after opening the Kapar Umno division meeting here.

Flash floods hit Kuala Lumpur and several areas in Selangor after a heavy downpour on Thursday, claiming two lives, destroying properties and leaving thousands of people stranded.

Fearing that the intermittent heavy rain might continue till end of the year, Dr Mohd Khir proposed that the Federal Government set up a special committee to study flood problems in the Federal Territory and Selangor.

He said relevant authorities in the State had already been directed to conduct indepth studies in areas prone to flooding, and on the causes and recommendations to overcome the problems.

"There may be a need to allocate a substantial sum of money to undertake remedial measures. I think it's better we spend the money now rather than spend a much bigger sum later when the situation gets out of control," he added.

For a start, to prevent flooding during heavy downpour, the State Government plans to build retention ponds to regulate the flow of water into the Klang River.

This is one of the proactive measures to help prevent backflow of water which is the main cause of flooding.

"Plans are also being made to convert ex-mining pools in Puchong and Gombak into retention ponds besides being recreational sites," Dr Mohd Khir said.

The retention ponds will be serviced and maintained by developers.

Dr Mohd Khir also attributed the flooding to the irresponsible attitude of Malaysians who throw rubbish into drains and rivers.

"If people do not change their attitude, then the problem of flooding will continue. When the drains are clogged with rubbish, the water gets stagnant and this causes the overflow."

He said squatters who live along monsoon drains and rivers also contributed to the flood problem because of their unhygienic ways of dumping rubbish either near the drains and rivers or into them.

"The Government wants to solve the flood problem but the people should also co-operate by placing their rubbish in garbage bags and bins instead of throwing it into drains and rivers," he added.