

04 MAY 2001

Abdullah-Town

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT AMENDMENT TO STREAMLINE EFFORTS

PUTRAJAYA, May 4 (Bernama) -- The proposed amendment to Town and Country Planning Act 1976, to be tabled in Parliament in July, aims to streamline efforts between the Federal and state governments.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the National Council for Local Governments (MNKT), in a meeting today, unanimously approved the proposal.

"It will standardise the laws and policies on town and country planning," he said at a press conference after chairing the MNKT meeting here.

"The proposed amendment will also help improve communication and cooperation between the various state governments concerning cross-border development issues."

The MNKT meeting also approved seven proposals submitted by state and local authorities, including another amendment to the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur Entertainment Act (Amendment 2001) for a more effective enforcement of the law.

"The development of Putrajaya, for example, requires the cooperation of the Federal government and Selangor and Negeri Sembilan state governments," said Abdullah.

The proposed amendment will also enhance conservation efforts and land use at the local authority and state levels.

He said the setting up of what is to be called the Klang Valley Council by Kuala Lumpur and Selangor to coordinate development efforts is proposed under the amendment.

"We also plan to set up a National Physical Planning Council in which the Federal and state governments can deliberate on matters concerning town and country planning," he said.

The council will be chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad with Abdullah as the deputy.

Abdullah said some planning weaknesses exist currently such as when a district officer was given a role but not a town and country planning professional resulting in haphazard development in the particular area.

He said the proposed National Physical Planning Council will give advice but it does not plan to interfere in the development planning of state governments.

Also approved was a proposal on the environment friendly irrigation manual, making it a requirement in infrastructure development planning.

Another proposal approved was for state governments to amend their by-laws to make it compulsory for all new buildings, from June 1, 2002, to install dual flushing in a move to save water.

The MNKT also set the criteria for the upgrade in status for local authorities -- for city status, a local authority must have a population of at least 300,000 people and an annual revenue of at least RM80 million.

For a district council to be upgraded to a municipal council, it must have a population of not less than 100,000 people and an annual revenue of not less than RM10 million.

Abdullah said another proposal approved was for the Health Ministry to take over the running of health services of 50 local authorities facing financial constraints.

He said the proposal for local authorities to assume control over abandoned land or that used for unapproved purposes was also approved.

As for the proposal on the Kuala Lumpur Entertainment Act, he said it sought to increase the penalties for offences such as operating entertainment outlets without a licence and putting up entertainment advertisements without a permit.

-- BERNAMA  
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