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Hilmi-Housing

PENANG GOV'T ACKNOWLEDGES IMBALANCE IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

PENANG, May 25 (Bernama) -- The state government has conceded that there is still unbalanced development in housing projects in urban areas where people live in congested settlements and improper houses.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya said the state government had identified such areas and expected to provide about 5,000 low and medium-cost houses to the people concerned within the next 10 years.

"There are areas which are congested and with improper housing in the state. The state government, through the Urban Poverty Eradication Committee set up last year and chaired by me, has identified the areas concerned on the island and in Seberang Perai," he said.

He said the state government welcomed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's criticism on the unbalanced housing development in the state yesterday.

Several villages which were congested and undeveloped as well as squatter settlements would be developed into housing schemes by the state government with the cooperation of government agencies and the private sector, he told reporters after launching the Northern Zone Anti-Corruption Agency's Rakan Muda Self-Esteem Enhancing Programme at the Balik Pulau Sports Complex, here today.

The Prime Minister, when launching the land reclamation project at Tanjung Tokong, here yesterday had criticised the Penang government because there were still people who were living in poor housing condition in the state, similar to the situation prevailing in the 1950s.

Dr Hilmi said emphasis would be given to areas along Sungai Pinang, Jelutong, Kampung Pisang Awak and Batu Uban on the island as well as Bagan, Ujung Batu, Ampang Jajar, Rumah Hijau and Sungai Rambai in Seberang Perai.

He said that in Sungai Pinang, about 200 units of low-cost flats with three-bedrooms each would be built on land belonging to the Penang Islamic Religious Council (MAIPP) while several sites owned by MAIPP, the Penang Municipal Council (MPPP) and state government were also being identified for similar projects.

Dr Hilmi said the state government had also changed the policy on the construction of houses in urban areas from medium-cost to low-cost housing to enable more people to own homes.

-- BERNAMA

SA AO