

**10MP targets to reduce Orang Asli poverty**  
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The rural and regional development ministry has targeted to reduce the number of poor Orang Asli heads of household from 13,642 to 3,410 by the end of the 10th Malaysia Plan period in 2015, the Dewan Rakyat was told today.

shafie apdal and mps no defection pc 280808 04Minister Mohd Shafie Apdal (right) said various measures would continue to be implemented to reduce the figure to zero by 2020.

"So far, 166 farms totalling 23,945 hectares have been developed. Besides, 2,320 hectares of Orang Asli land have also be cultivated with cash crops such as maize, sweet potato, banana, pineapple and lemon grass.

"Furthermore, 2,200 Orang Asli heads of household have been provided with agricultural inputs with an allocation of RM6.6 million in a government effort to ease the livelihood of the Orang Asli community," he said when winding up debate on the 10th Malaysia Plan for his ministry.

Mohd Shafie said the ministry also gave special emphasis to the educational development of the Orang Asli whereby 212 kindergartens and 93 schools had been established for Orang Asli children.

He said two skills training centres had been set up, in Paya Bungor, Pahang, and Damansara Damai, Selangor, to train 150 Orang Asli youths every year to enable them take up employment.

jahai orang asli kelantan tualang story 200409 03He also said that to change the mindset and enhance the leadership qualities of the Orang Asli, 175 leadership courses had been provided last year for Orang Asli Tok Batin (headmen) and members of village development committees.

Mohd Shafie said that during the 9th Malaysia Plan period (2006-2010), RM377.3 million had been allocated for the development of the Orang Asli, of which 40 percent or RM150 million was for construction of basic infrastructure.

He also said that under the Economic Stimulus Package, RM290 million more had been allocated to provide clean water, village roads and house aid programmes.

"It is estimated that some 15,000 families or 75,000 Orang Asli will benefit from these development programmes," he said.

- Bernama