

Fast-track projects to uplift poor in Sabah

NST- 23/7/2007

KOTA KINABALU: Continuing poverty in the interior of Sabah makes it imperative for government programmes to get going quickly, Second Finance Minister Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop said.

He said Finance Ministry officers did not have to stick to schedules but instead use fast-track methods to produce results.

"There are many challenges for our officers in Sabah. There is poverty in the interior, there are schools that need to be repaired

and I have watched on television how children need to wake up early to go to school.

"There is so much that we as representatives of the government can do to highlight these issues to the ministry. If a normal procedure takes time, come and see me, my door is always open. Don't get tangled up in bureaucracy," he said.

He reminded officers to give their full commitment in the next few years to make sure that projects were implemented.

At a press conference after a dialogue with his officers, Nor Mohamed said there were no major problems in implementing projects as staff were motivated and committed in their duties.

He was also told that Syarikat Perumahan Negara Berhad would build 30,690 affordable homes in Sabah through 31 projects, adding that 10 of them had taken off.

"An important aspect is quality of life among the people. We want our people to be able to afford

comfortable homes, which come with three bedrooms," he said.

He said low-cost homes would cost between RM35,000 and RM42,000 while those in the medium-cost range were priced at RM75,000 up to a maximum of RM150,000.

He also said the Sabah Customs Department had collected RM155 million in duties in the first six months of this year, compared with RM112 million in the corresponding period, an increase of 21 per cent.