

Abdullah: These initiatives will help boost the property sector

The Star - 14/4/2007

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PETALING JAYA: The far-reaching initiatives announced by the Government are to innovate the property sector and to cut bureaucracy in the industry, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He added that these bold moves would also minimise the problem of abandoned projects and delays which have long caused much hardship to buyers.

"I hope these important initiatives will be accepted and appreciated by the rakyat. I believe it will increase the competitiveness of our country and improve our standard of living," he said at the *Conference To Improve The Delivery System of Government Services: To Improve The Development Processes As Well As Property Management* here.

Among the initiatives announced yesterday were the setting up of one-stop centres in every state for housing projects for fast-track approval, replacing the Certificate of Fitness for Occupancy (CFO) with the Certificate of Completion and Compliance (CCC) and giving incentives to developers who adopt the Build-Then-Sell (BTS) concept.

On the one-stop centre, he said it would cut down the approval process for development which adopted the BTS concept, high impact, foreign investment and government projects to four to six months.

Previously, he said, the process took three to five years as it involved approvals from different departments and agencies separately.

As for the replacement of CFO with CCC, he said there should be no more delays caused by the examination and verification process by local authorities.

"Now, professionals such as engineers and architects who have drawn up the plan will be the ones doing all the examinations. They will

be the ones to issue the CCC, which will be done alongside the Vacant Possession certificate by developers," he said.

However, local authorities, he added, would still be making scheduled checks during construction to ensure that work followed the plans and regulations.

Abdullah said developers who used the BTS concept would be exempted from paying the deposit fee for housing development licence and be entitled to exemption from building low-cost houses.

The process of development proposals by these developers, he added, would also be shortened to four months.

He noted that this gave buyers an alternative to choose between the BTS and Sell-Then-Build (STB) concept.

Abdullah said officers from state, district and local governments would be given two months to get used to the new policies.

He said they must attend intensive two-day courses organised by National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) to practise the guidelines set by the Housing and Local Government Ministry.

"After that, I hope the rakyat will enjoy the results. I do not want any mistakes, lack of understanding, confusion or chaos.

"Otherwise, the people will get angry with us," he said.

Abdullah said the six laws, which used to govern the sector, had now been streamlined into a new Act which was gazetted recently, namely the Building and Common Property Act with an inspectorate set up by the Housing and Local Government Ministry to monitor progress of the initiatives and report to the Cabinet.

He said the inspectorate would also be responsible for listening to grouses from the public while The Special Task Force to Facilitate Business (Pemudah) would channel the complaints and suggestions from the private sector.