



Light moment: Ong mingling with his deputy minister Datuk Azidah Mohd Dun (third from right), officers from his ministry and members of the local authority after opening the consultative meeting at Hotel Seri Pacific in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Bid to help poor families

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Councillors told to knock on doors

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KUALA LUMPUR: Councillors should go to the ground and identify families whose household incomes are below the poverty line, said Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting.

He said the families were entitled to financial assistance under the Urban Poverty Scheme introduced by the ministry last year.

"You should bring cases of families or single mothers who are in need of financial assistance to the ministry as we have the scheme to help them.

"You should carry out house-to-house visits in your area such as the low-cost flats.

"Knock on their doors and find out the people's needs," Ong said when opening a meeting of women councillors.

Ong said he had himself come across families living in abject

poverty during his visits to various villages nationwide.

He urged the councillors to have good networking in order to carry out their work effectively.

He said the assistance included monthly house rental aid, transport allowance for school-going children and working mothers.

"The ministry gives out school allowance for students preparing for the new term every year.

"We also provide one-off assistance to those who are accepted to public universities," he said, adding that the ministry received RM20mil for the scheme this year.

He said applications received from the local authorities would be processed in two weeks.

To date, the ministry has approved 4,605 applications under the scheme.

The poverty line varies according to the state. According to a report by the Economic Planning Unit in 2004, the average poverty line in Malaysia is RM687.