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POVERTY

Working their way upwards

KUALA LUMPUR: The government wants to eradicate hardcore poverty and reduce the incidence of poverty from 3.6 per cent to 2.8 percent this year.

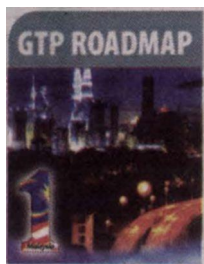
The Government Transformation Programme (GTP) Roadmap states that there are still 200,000 households classified as poor and more than 44,000 households as extreme poor.

As such, several measures will be implemented to enhance the productivity of the low-income households.

For starters, the Rural and Regional Development Ministry and its agencies will adopt a common definition of poverty to facilitate the identification of target groups.

Households with a total income of less than or equal to RM2,000 a month will fall into the low-income household category, households with a total income less than or equal to RM750 a month are considered poor while households with a total income less than or equal to RM440 a month are extreme poor.

To improve immediate welfare and ensure sustainable



income, the government will, among others, distribute welfare assistance on the first day of each month.

The government will also provide support to increase home ownership by offering about 44,000 low-cost houses for sale and rent through Kuala Lumpur City Hall and the National Housing Corporation.

In addition, to equip the poor and extreme poor with means to increase their income, the government will intensify schemes to build their capabilities through Gerakan 1 Azam, a new programme to create jobs through employment and entrepreneurship.

The programme incorporates various schemes announced in the 2010 Budget such as the establishment of

NKPIs AND TARGETS FOR LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

<i>Focus area</i>	<i>KPI</i>	<i>BASELINE</i>	<i>2010</i>
Extreme poor	Number of households in extreme poverty	44,000 households	0 households
Poor	Incidence of poverty	3.6%	2.8%
Low-income households	New women entrepreneurs trained	N/A	2,000 additional



300 Kedai Desa as well as the Skim Pembangunan Kesejahteraan Rakyat.

The government will also match people from low-income households for jobs in companies, including government-linked companies.

"We will intensify training and coaching to help them succeed in their jobs. We will also continue to encourage employers to give priority to Malaysians when filling positions where foreign workers are prevalent, and develop tax and other incentives for them

to do so," the roadmap said.

The government will also create employment opportunities by setting up Jimat 1 Malaysia grocery stores.

"We aim to set up 50 such stores by 2010 and one in every district by 2011."

The GTP will also develop a mechanism to provide micro-credit to eligible low-income households to help them start small businesses.

This is to wean them from long-term financial aid.

"Applications and disbursements will be handled by

banks as well as outlets of GLCs like Pos Malaysia and Petronas petrol stations.

"At least one pilot project will be introduced per state by the first quarter of 2011."

The government will also provide support to re-integrate marginalised groups such as ex-convicts and ex-drug addicts into society.

"We will provide temporary shelters (Anjung Damai), counselling, skills training and programmes to build community support for the re-integration of these people."