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3 steps to boost public housing

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EFFICIENCY: RM140 million a year to maintain low-cost, affordable homes

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THE National Housing Council has given its nod to three key measures to boost the quality and efficiency of the housing sector. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced the measures yesterday, starting with the establishment of the National Public Housing Management Corporation (3PAN).

With an annual allocation of RM140 million, he said 3PAN would "take over the management and maintenance of low-cost and affordable homes built by the government and private sector."

Najib said these homes were currently managed and maintained by the state governments through their local authorities.

"However, due to financial constraints, local authorities have problems looking after the housing projects properly."

During the initial stage, 3PAN will look after 101,000 units of low-cost and affordable homes nationwide.

Najib also announced the government's decision to give an upfront subsidy payment under the MyHome (Private Affordable Ownership Housing Scheme) programme.

"Previously, the subsidy payment is made after the housing project is completed and the sale and purchase agreement signed."

"We decided to upfront the payment of subsidy on condition that developers provide a guarantee bond for the government," he said.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak witnessing the exchange of documents between Maybank's group head of global banking Amrul Faisal Wan Zahir (right) and PRIMA chief executive officer Datuk Abdul Mutalib Alias. With them is Maybank chairman and director Datuk Seri Ismail Shahudin. Pic by Mohd Fadli Hamzah

adding that this would ensure a win-win situation for buyers and developers under the MyHome scheme.

Najib said the council agreed to give the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry three months to find buyers for properties reserved for Bumiputeras before selling these units to the public.

This would mean that developers would have to wait another three months from the stipulated period given to the respective states before selling these units to other buyers, he added.

"In some states, developers are given six months to find buyers for the properties reserved for Bumiputeras before offering these

premises to the public.

"Under this new measure, when the six-month period is up, the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry will find buyers for these properties. So in total, it will take nine months before they can be sold to the public."

Najib said this after witnessing the exchange of documents on a RM3

billion bridging loan facility between Perbadanan PRIMA Malaysia (PRIMA) and Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) to partly finance the development works of PRIMA housing projects.

Under the agreement, Maybank will provide comprehensive financial facilities for the construction of PRIMA homes for the next five years.

Present were Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan, PRIMA chairman Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa, Maybank chairman and director Datuk Seri Ismail Shahudin and PRIMA chief executive officer Datuk Abdul Mutalib Alias.

Najib also chaired the National Housing Council meeting that had deliberated on the progress of building one million affordable homes by 2018. Between January 2013 and June this year, 194,456 units had been built, 178,922 units were under construction and 349,631 units at various stages of planning.

Later, Rahman said the decision to give his ministry an extra three months to look for buyers for the properties reserved for Bumiputeras was made following complaints from Bumiputera buyers, who had claimed that finding such properties was hard because such premises had been sold off to the public.

"We will work with the Bumiputera Economic Council on this since they have a list of buyers."

He said he hoped the new measure would stop allegations that developers were "hiding" such properties and only released them once the period given by the state governments for Bumiputera buyers to get the properties at discounted rates had ended.

On 3PAN, Rahman said it was done to ensure low-cost and affordable homes were well maintained.

"We want to address issues such as broken railings and non-operational elevators."