

**Parliament: PR1MA Bill To Help Middle-income Group, Says PM
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today said that the Perumahan Rakyat 1Malaysia (PR1MA) Bill was important to lessen the financial pressure faced by the middle-income group living in towns and outskirts of towns.

He said the Bill was introduced for the overseeing of matters related to housing development and construction, infrastructure and other facilities under the PR1MA housing programme and to enable the establishment of a statutory body called PR1MA Corporation Malaysia.

Najib said PR1MA Malaysia would be an institution with a special focus and able to undertake strategic actions in tackling the issue of financial constraints faced by the middle-income group, efficiently and effectively.

"Through this initiative, a strategic socio-economic housing development model at the national level can be created, which will integrate the development of quality, affordable residential complexes with facilities for the local community, setting up of community institutions and looking after the economy of the middle-income group in the town areas and outskirts."

He said this was towards the creation of a harmonious and sustainable society while reducing the cost of living.

Tabling the PR1M Bill 2011 in the Dewan Rakyat today, Najib also revealed that the Bill has 81 clauses divided into 10 sections.

According to Najib, the changing urbanisation trends meant increasing number of people facing financial constraints, including to own a house, and needed the government's intervention to solve their problem.

He said the impact of poverty was felt more in the urban areas compared to the rural areas due to the higher cost of living and lack of community support.

"Urban poverty as well as rural poverty must be dealt with seriously by the government," he said.

Najib said the Bill was part of the government's effort to balance the lack of supply of medium-cost houses to ensure the success of the My First House financial scheme that had been launched.

"The time has come for the government to rebalance one of society's basic needs, that is, to own a house, not only for the low-income group but also the middle-income earners who cannot afford to buy a house in the free market in the urban areas while they are not eligible to apply for low-cost units," he said.

Najib said under the Bill, among the corporation's functions were planning, developing and

maintaining quality, affordable residential buildings in an efficient and effective manner, including working together with private developers on projects based on the guidelines set by PR1MA Corporation Malaysia on building such houses for the urban middle-income group.

Clause 30 to 35 under Section V of the Bill touch on the setting up of a PR1MA Advisory Council and on the eligibility to purchase or rent PR1MA housing units, to involve in PR1MA development and allocation of the housing units by PR1MA Corporation Malaysia.

The Bill, when passed, will give the power and rights to the corporation to buy back PR1MA houses from the owners who have breached rules and to sell those units to others who are eligible.

The Bill also provides for the setting up of an Appeals Tribunal.

The Bill will be known as the Perumahan Rakyat 1Malaysia (PR1MA) Act when passed.

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