

Some settlers may only get loans after FELDA IPO, says Ahmad Maslan
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BENTONG, March 4 — Datuk Ahmad Maslan said around half of 10,700 loan applications for the repair of FELDA settlers' home may only be granted after the listing of FELDA Global Ventures Holdings (FGVH) later this year, Bernama Online reported.

The deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department said, however, that the other half will be approved between June and August this year.

"FELDA will not impose any service charge or interest, but the settlers have to pay back the loan through the deduction of farm products," he was quoted as saying by Bernama Online.

Ahmad went on to say that the proposed listing of FGVH on Bursa Malaysia would see it become one of the richest Malay firms on the stock exchange.

"[The] FELDA transformation made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak will provide many benefits to the settlers, where they would no longer depend on the farm outcome," he said further.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had recently said the listing of FGV, announced in Budget 2012, is expected to take place in April, instead of the middle of the year as was earlier planned.

Najib was earlier thought to be considering postponing the IPO as settlers' opposition to the deal risks undermining Barisan Nasional's (BN) support in fiercely contested general election expected this year.

Critics contend that the proposed listing, which will see loss-making FGVH assume control of the FELDA Investment Co-operative (KPF), will short-change smallholders and saddle FELDA with up to RM1.5 billion in yearly deficit.

The government has said the move will result in a RM5.9 billion lump sum payment to settlers but the National FELDA Settlers' Children's Association (ANAK) has insisted it will not be in cash but shares in FGV.

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