

Government Orders Ministries, Agencies To Propose Mechanism To Tackle Issue Of Vagrants
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PUTRAJAYA, Sept 23 (Bernama) -- The government has ordered all the ministries and agencies involved to propose a mechanism that can be fine-tuned to tackle the growing issue of vagrants in cities in the country.

This was decided at the Social Council meeting Wednesday chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi at the Conference Hall in Perdana Putra, here.

In a statement, the Social Council said the government viewed seriously the issue of vagrants, which had increased greatly in the big cities.

It said the issue not only involved homeless people, but also drug addicts and those with infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS who should be given attention.

"The approach is likely to involve volunteers, trained counsellors, psychologists and psychiatry, as well as religious preachers.

"This problem must be solved holistically to ensure that Malaysia is a country that is prosperous for all," the statement said.

The Social Council said the government would carefully examine the need for a social impact assessment for development projects to be implemented, mainly for projects near residential areas.

The statement said this was so that the project owners and developers could come up with social problem mitigation plans after the projects were completed.

"At the same time, components of projects that are people-centric will also be assessed so that the projects developed are truly conducive to be used and occupied. The Department of Town and Country Planning and the Economic Planning Unit have been given the responsibility to coordinate this matter, so that the assessment can be done," it said.

The Social Council said the government would also continue to prioritise social development of the people under the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP), from next year until 2020.

"In addition to ensuring that people in the bottom 40 per cent (B40) get an ideal standard of living and a better income, the government will also ensure that the provision of services such as education, health, public transport, affordable housing and other basic needs are appropriately addressed.

"The social safety net programmes will be improved to ensure that no one is left out of the provision of assistance by the welfare agencies that have been mandated by the

government to carry out the task.

"The involvement of NGOs will also be enhanced to ensure the success of the 11th Malaysia Plan," it said.

At today's meeting, the three main papers discussed were: (1) The direction of the 11th Malaysia Plan in National Social Development by EPU, (2) Social Impact Assessment in Development Projects by the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, and (3) Proposals for Solving the Issue of Vagrants in Malaysia by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.

The meeting was also attended by ministers, representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and senior civil servants.

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