

**Government hopes to give financial aid to flood victims earlier, says Zahid**  
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The government hopes to give at least RM500 to each household affected by the floods this year before the floods subside, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Zahid said the assistance should be immediately given to the flood victims to help them with their expenses.

He added that a memorandum on this would be prepared by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Shahidan Kasim and Agriculture and Agro-Based Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek to be submitted to the Cabinet to improve the process.

"The memorandum is to get the approval for the money to be obtained from the insurance companies based on premium payments made by the National Disaster Management Agency.

"When the floods happen, the insurance company which took out the premium will pay each household more than RM500 before the floods recede," he told a press conference after chairing a National Disaster Management High-Level Committee meeting today.

The meeting was to discuss strategies and the course of action for the agencies involved in disaster management as well as assess their effectiveness and capabilities in disaster management.

Zahid said during the two-hour meeting it was agreed that the flood management plan in Kemaman would be made the special template for flood management at the national level.

"This is based on the example set by the Kemaman member of Parliament who made the preparations before the floods occurred, during the floods and post-flood. The three methods will be used as the new template for the national flood management," he said.

Zahid also said a special briefing on the floods would be held soon for all members of Parliament, district officers and other parties in the areas affected by the floods so that better preparations could be made.

He added that the Department of Civil Defence (JPAM) had been made the secretariat for the Central Committee on Disaster Management and Aid at the national, state and district levels, with all the National Security Council's assets, allocations and logistics handed to JPAM.

Zahid also touched on the RM180 million allocation for flood management announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak when tabling Budget 2016.

"Although the amount is small, it does not include the purchase of assets which had been made earlier and infrastructure improvement, as well as several public amenities," he said.

He said the Education Department had also given its commitment to improving the facilities in schools which would be made flood evacuation centres by providing more toilets for the flood victims.

In a separate development, Zahid said a special meeting to tackle the problem of air pollution would be held in the future.

"Today was only a briefing," he said. – Bernama, November 5, 2015.

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