

**2,114 Applications Approved Under My First Home Scheme since 2013 - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said 2,114 applications were approved under the My First Home Scheme involving RM431 million in loans between 2013 and January this year.

He said Bank Negara Malaysia records also showed that 876 applications under the Youth Housing Scheme were approved between 2013 and February this year involving RM215.5 million in loans.

"It is incumbent on the government to ensure that every household in the country particularly youths and low and medium income groups have access to housing, in line with our mission to improve the people's quality of life.

"Despite the fluctuating global economy due to the decline in oil prices and depreciation of the ringgit, the government will continue to build affordable homes for the people particularly the youths," he said.

He said this during a question-and-answer session in response to Shahrudin Ismail (BN-Kangar) at the Dewan Rakyat here today.

To another question from Shahrudin on whether the government, to support its 1Home 1Family aspiration, would review the eligibility criteria to enable youths with an income of RM2,500 and below to own a home, Najib said various initiatives had been implemented by the government to assist the group.

He cited the People's Housing Project (PPR), Federal Territory Affordable Home Project (Rumawip), 1Malaysia Civil Servants Housing Programme (PPA1M), 1Malaysia People-friendly Housing Project (RMR1M), My Dream House and People's Aspiration Housing project.

He said RM1.6 billion was set aside in the Budget 2016 for affordable home projects among them, 175,000 units of 1Malaysia People's Housing (PR1MA), RMR1M (10,000 units), PPA1M (100,000 units) and PPR (22,300 apartment units and 9,800 terrace units).

"Through various incentives under the My First Home Scheme such as exemption of stamp duty, deposit and no constraints in terms of age, price ceiling and salary, hopefully our youths particularly those in the low and medium income bracket could realize their dream of owning a home," he said.

To a supplementary question from Normala Abdul Samad (BN-Pasir Gudang) on the government's efforts to maintain house prices, Najib said the government encouraged government-linked companies to build affordable homes and ensure that there would always be adequate supply to meet demand.

Najib who is also Pekan Member of Parliament said cooperation from state governments was also vital in the initiatives to maintain house prices.

He said state governments could for instance, offer state land at a low premium for more affordable homes to be built nationwide.

"A few days ago I launched a programme with the Pahang state government in which the houses were built by the private sector on state land. The premium was so low that the units could be sold at RM175,000 each, even though the market value is RM300,000.

"This is an example of cooperation that the state could give in helping the government to build more affordable homes," he said.

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