

14 AUG, 2019

THE GOVERNMENT'S PROMISE

The Star, Malaysia



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Affordability will remain as the keyword for housing going forward

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THE real estate industry has been abuzz ever since the new government under Pakatan Harapan took the reins following the 14th General Election on May 9 last year.

As speculations on how the new status quo and government policies might affect the market have essentially settled, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government is already pushing forward its set of goals in keeping its promise to the people.

This promise is listed in its website to enforce its stance. They are:

1. Ensure quality housing for all
2. Improve accessibility and increase ability to own a home
3. Ensure neighbourhood social cohesiveness and wellbeing
4. Improve coordination between housing and transport development for a better quality of life
5. Strengthening institutional capacity to implement the National Housing Policy (Dasar Perumahan Negara/ DRN)

Affordability is the keyword and is expected to remain so for the next 10 years as the government has targeted one million homes to be delivered within this timeframe.

While the government works to build affordable housing for the B40 group, it is also equally important that their living standards should also be improved, said Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin.

Community building is also an important aspect in the effort to provide affordable housing for this group, as this would both educate and encourage the B40 homeowners to maintain their homes and facilities for their betterment, she added.

"It will be good for the country if we can bring up this group," she said, explaining that this would have a direct impact on the economy.

Zuraida said helping the B40 elevate their financial standing has a direct connection with the economy. The more well off they become, the richer the nation, she said.

She said that when the B40 homeowners can ensure that their properties are well maintained, this would increase the value of their homes. And when the time comes for them to upgrade, these homes would have increased in value and they can sell the properties at a higher price.

"We are essentially empowering them with the opportunity to better themselves, but the community



"The more well off they become, the richer the nation."

-Zuraida



building aspect is necessary," she said.

Zuraida also believed that the target to build about one million houses can be achieved as 130,000 houses are expected to be completed by the end of the year. This translates to about 13% of the target delivered by year end.

"We are confident of achieving this target because many developers are also building affordable homes. The target is not just what the government is building, but also with the help of the private sector," she said, adding that the government is

encouraging more developers to join in the effort.

She also said new policies would be added on as part of the government's effort to house people. These include social housing, which is expected to be incorporated into the 12th Malaysia Plan, albeit

a modified version of the ones that have proven successful in developed nations like UK and the US.

The government is currently focusing on the rent-to-own

route for the lower income groups who are unable to afford the 10% downpayment, she said.

For the social housing, she said it will likely be a partial social housing approach but the ministry is still deliberating on the mechanism of Malaysian's version.

On the Home Ownership Campaign (HOC), Zuraida was happy to note that the total amount of sales as of July 26 stood at RM5.73bil, with Kuala Lumpur clocking in the highest value at RM1.47bil followed by Selangor with nearly RM1.4bil, and Johor coming in third with RM993.74mil.

No target has been set for the extended period of the HOC as this is to ease the burden of the purchasers, she said.





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