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PH PROMISE

MEET NEW LADY OF HOUSING MINISTRY

Zuraida wants to place all housing projects under one umbrella

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PAKATAN Harapan, in its manifesto, has promised to improve the housing policy, which includes having a special housing loan scheme to enable youth to own their first homes, aside from promising to bear maintenance fees for low-cost housing.

Newly-minted Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin said she was committed to upholding the promises made in the PH manifesto, although the sector was not included in the 10 main pledges that the ruling coalition said it would fulfil within 100 days of it coming into power.

The New Straits Times Press recently spoke to the minister, who is the Ampang member of parliament, at her new office here.



Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin is committed to upholding the promises made in Pakatan Harapan's manifesto. PIC TAKEN FROM ZURaida KAMARUDDIN'S FACEBOOK PAGE

Question: What is your plan for the ministry, especially within the first 100 days of PH becoming the government?

Answer: In the PH manifesto, the housing sector was not included in the 10 main pledges for the first 100 days.

However, after being briefed by senior officers, I am proposing to the cabinet to rearrange all housing projects, including those handled by the Prime Minister's Department, to be placed under one area.

This includes the 1Malaysia Housing Programme (PRIMA) that is being completed. PRIMA is not under my ministry, but is under the Prime Minister's Department.

I feel that it should be placed under one ministry because the end goal is the same, which is to help the people.

In fact, if PRIMA is placed under the ministry, we can review the mechanism and if there's a need for an upgrade, that's what we will do.

Aside from PRIMA, we will look into the effectiveness of the People's Housing Project (PPR) and the Youth Transit Housing (My-

Transit). We want to ensure that all home owners deserve such aid.

We can save cost when all housing agencies are placed under one umbrella and the savings can be channelled to the people. In a way, PH's promise to build one million houses can be realised immediately.

Q: In terms of implementing plans for affordable homes, what are you proposing?

A: Efforts to improve the people's lives is our priority, although we are aware that we will face many challenges, like changing the mentality of low-income earners so that they know how to manage a good housing environment.

This is part of the manifesto and everything offered is within our capability. We believe that our effort to place all housing agencies under one umbrella can be realised under the National

Affordable Housing Council, which was introduced by PH, who will monitor all the works.

This council will be tasked with monitoring the construction of affordable housing, coordinating the database and to arrange a self-renting scheme for the B40 and M40 groups. For example, in Selangor, there are low-cost houses that are being upgraded to medium-cost housing.

Q: What about concerns about the difficulty for people to obtain housing loans?

A: We noticed that there is a need to review housing

programmes thoroughly to find the most effective way of creating affordable housing prices. I have discussed with the Economic Affairs Minister (Datuk Seri Azmin Ali) about this. He said Bank Negara must be more relaxed with its loan requirements. However, there must be a

win-win situation where the banks and buyers gain.

Q: How do you plan to tackle the problems surrounding PPRs, which lack maintenance?

A: I am very concerned about low-income earners because most of them are renting in PPRs to save money. But problems like inefficient maintenance is a never-ending issue.

After years of witnessing this problem, I plan to place the PPR management under the local authorities (PBT).

They are managed by the Joint Management Body (JMB). We want those with low incomes to enjoy a comfortable life. PBT will take over the JMBs' role until PPRs can find another body to take care of them.

Q: What do you think of the issue of PPRs being dominated by foreign workers?

A: Foreign workers live in PPRs because they want to save money on rent, and as such, a unit is occupied by many people. This issue must be resolved immediately by forming a special unit to look into this.

We will create a system to register foreign workers renting at PPRs. By doing this, we can monitor and improve residents' quality of life.

Q: Are there other improvements the ministry is looking to make?

A: We are studying the role of the Fire and Rescue Department. It is among the first to arrive at a scene and has proven its capability in handling problems.

However, there are not enough fire stations. Data shows that Malaysia has only 500 fire stations, and to ensure safety of Malaysians, we are proposing to increase that number.

Q: Ministry works aside, did you ever imagine that you would one day become a federal minister?

A: I never thought of becoming a member of parliament, much less a minister. But I view this as a mandate given by the people to improve their lives. This is a huge responsibility and I have to perform my duty in a transparent manner. God willing, I will do a better job than my predecessor.