

# Keeping floods at bay

FLOODS affect the lives of millions in the country annually and leaves an adverse impact that includes loss of life, damage to properties and environment degradation.

A study conducted in 2003 on "Updating of Condition of Flooding in Malaysia", by the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) revealed that 5.7 million people were living in flood-prone areas in the country, which covers nine per cent of the country's total land mass.

The total cost of the country's annual flood damage stands at an estimated RM915 million.

The Natural Resources and Environment Ministry, under its Ministerial Key Results Area (MKRA), was given the task of reducing the number of people affected by flood through mitigation projects nationwide.

To achieve this, RM1 billion has been set aside for the ministry to carry out 57 mitigation projects.

DID Senior Assistant Director (Performance Audit Unit) Ong Hon Lim said floods were one of the few dis-

asters to disrupt the daily activities of the rakyat.

"In order to alleviate this problem, the ministry, through our department, has initiated 57 flood mitigation projects in flood-prone areas."

The project is expected to benefit some 2.1 million people living in these areas.

Last year, a total of 42 flood mitigation projects costing RM1.7 billion had a positive impact on 1.7 million people staying in flood-prone areas nationwide.

He said the total cost for the projects this year was RM910 million.

"A typical flood mitigation projects consists of the widening and deepening of rivers, installation of pumps, construction of detention ponds, flood control gates, flood bypasses and also upgrading of the drainage system, depending on the area."

Ong said up until Nov 1, 45 projects had been completed and the remaining were expected to be completed by the end of next month.

The ministry's efforts will likely see the number of people affected by



The government has taken steps to prevent a recurrence of floods in the country.

floods reduced from 350,000 to 400,000 by year end as well.

To date, the completed projects have protected 284,415 people from floods.

"But there are a lot of challenges in

implementing the flood mitigation projects, such as the relocation of utilities and land acquisitions."

"We managed to resolve these challenges through negotiations with the stakeholders and by cooperating

with other Federal and state government agencies.

"The lives and properties of affected people will be protected with the completion of these mitigation projects."