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## Acquisition of underground land now regulated nationally

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The National Land Council (MTN) yesterday agreed to set a minimum depth for acquisition of underground land for development purposes, says Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said the MTN meeting chaired by him at the Parliament House yesterday agreed that under the National Land Code (Underground Land) (Minimum Depth) Regulations 2017, the minimum depth was set at six metres for agricultural land, 10 metres for building and 15 metres for industrial land.

This is in line with the needs and requirements of the rapid underground land development, such as in the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), High Speed Rail (HSR) and Bandar Malaysia projects, he said in a statement issued after the meeting.

Ahmad Zahid said the matter was one of the seven passed in the 73rd MTN meeting, which was also attended by Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, Chief Ministers and Menteri Besar, as well as top officials from relevant agencies.



Ahmad Zahid (left) chairing National Land Council meeting at the Parliament building. Wan Junaidi is at second right. — Bernama photo

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Wan Junaidi said the regulation would be gazetted today and would take effect immediately.

He said that the regulation would also enable the government to acquire underground land even though the value of the land had yet to be ascertained, and that the system would also not cause the

land owner to lose his right to the land.

The minister said the meeting also agreed for all quarters involved in the construction of public infrastructure to refer to the ministry first should the proposed project cross any forest area.

He said this was important to enable early mitigation measures to be taken so that the forest and

the biological diversity would not be destroyed.

“For example, it was initially said that 2,000 hectares of forest would be destroyed to make way for the ECRL (Eastern Corridor Rail Link) project, but after discussions, we managed to save 80 per cent of the forest areas and lost only 25 hectares,” he said. — Bernama