

# Build more houses for Emiratis

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- By Samir Salama, Associate Editor
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Dubai: The Federal National Council has urged the government to act with haste in building the 40,000 houses ordered by the President His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

They also demanded an increase in the budget of the Shaikh Zayed Housing programme, which provides Emiratis with housing grants and loans.

Khalifa Bin Huwaiden, a Federal National Council member from Sharjah, said almost 30 per cent of the Emiratis do not own their houses — a factor which he said causes economic and social instability.

He estimated as many as 70,000 families or 280,000 Emiratis were in urgent need of houses, adding that their applications for housing grants or loans have been turned down.

Bin Huwaiden suggested that savings planning, an effective role by the central bank and commercial banks to develop finance programmes, and a proactive role of the Zayed Housing programme would resolve the problem.

Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Public Works, said insufficient funds were the reason behind the Zayed Housing Programme's inability to honour all applications for housing loans and grants.

The federal housing programme came under scrutiny after it was revealed that only 3,000 of 75,000 applications in 2009 had been approved and granted funding from the Shaikh Zayed Housing Programme.

The programme said in a statement that it approved 6,000 housing grants and loans in 2008 and 2009, while 51,000 applications were still being reviewed