GREEN SERIES

Towards greener pastures

> Interview with KeTTHA secretary-general on Malaysia's green plans and the recently announced Green Technology Master Plan

AT the International Urban Sustainability & Green Building Conference (USGBC) 2017, Datuk Seri Dr Zaini Ujang said in his opening speech that the urban population in Kuala Lumpur is expected to increase to 10 million by 2030 and that 60% of the world's population will be living in cosmopolitan cities; thus, living spaces will need to be cleaner and greener.

The Energy, Green technology and Water Ministry (KeTTHA) secretary-general also informed the audience that Malaysia is ranked 42 among the world's happiest nations and is fourth globally in terms of green cover. "Putrajaya is expected to become 'fully green' with 40% green cover by 2025. It can be a model for the world," Zaini said, sharing the good news before making known the arduous tasks that follow with the ministry's introduction of the Green Technology Master Plan (GTMP) on Oct 12.

The GTMP embodies the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016 – 2020) or 11MP, which had earmarked the need for green growth across six sectors. Its aim was to accelerate the course of the nation's growth and revolutionise its socio-economic development. The master plan focuses on six areas, building and property included; hence, we will be focusing on this area over the next few weeks.

IN THE BEGINNING

For decades, governments and world energy councils carried out scientific studies, experimenting and analysing various methodologies and techniques to generate energy. The reason was simply because it was a necessity in sustaining future generations, like oxygen is to life. While the world realised it needs to generate energy to meet societies' future needs, it also learnt of causal effects of greenhouse gasses (GHG), a "by-product" of energy consumption, which results in global warming and causes adverse climate conditions; hence, the need to generate energy conscientiously and consume it cleverly.

The outcome: the adoption of Green Technology (GT) found to supply renewable energy (RE), but requires the use of green practices and sustainable methods of process across green building, green purchasing, green chemistry, green nanotechnology, green lifestyles, etc. This is why the National Green Technology Policy (NGTP) was formed and introduced in 2009, spearheaded by KeTTHA. It focused on energy, the environment, the economy and social aspects. 11MP emphasised the need to pursue GT. It basically campaigned for strengthening the enabling environment, promoting sustainable consumption, conserving natural resources, and strengthening resilience against climate change and natural disasters.

DEEPER GREEN

Wanting to reinforce its "green stance", the government signed the Paris Agreement in 2015. The document called for nations to expedite global efforts to mitigate worsening climate conditions. In the agreement, Malaysia pledged to reduce its GHG emissions by 45% by 2030, spurring the establishment of a new gameplan to fulfil the pledge. Comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constituted under the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) banner; GT-pertinent issues deliberated included the pressing need for clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; and climate action.

While many Malaysians would ask why the need to set up various policies and plans instead of focusing on one at a time, Zaini responds, justifying the need to constantly develop and grow to move forward as the rest of the world is, as more knowledge and information is attained in addressing the challenges to meet the SDGs.

In drafting the new GTMP, KeTTHA received full support. Twenty consultations were conducted with stakeholders involving over 300 representatives from the government, various industries, NGOs and the academia. The objective of the GTMP: "to drive further economic growth as the plan, once it succeeds, expects to bring in RM160 billion; garner a cleaner environment for better lifestyles for future generations; and enhance well-being for the people while at the same time protect nature, impede global warming and improve the environment on the whole," informs Zaini. "At the end of the day, we want to be a green player, not a green consumer," he adds.

The GTMP does not phase out the targets set for 2020 and 2030. Instead it acts as a catalyst to drive the green issues and step up efforts to achieve the objectives targeted for 2020 and 2030, which aims to bridge the gap and shorten the time taken to becoming a high-income nation driven by green growth.

Follow the second part of the interview with the KeTTHA secretary-general in next week's section.

Datuk Seri Dr Zaini Ujang

Email your feedback and queries to: propertyqs@thesundaily.com

Targets in building sector

SECTORS / AREAS	2020	2025	2030
SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION PRACTICE			
Active design - MEPS	• MEPS law • 11 appliances • Upgrade current MEPS ratings	• 16 appliances • Harmonise MEPS rating to ASEAN SHINE	• All appliances • Universal MEPS rating
Number of certified buildings	• 550	-	• 1,750
Passive design - BEI	• Building energy regulation • BEI 120	• Sectoral BEI 90	• Sectoral BEI <60
SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION PRACTICE			
Construction method - IBS	• Public projects score 70 - 100% • Private projects score 50 - 100%	• New technologies i.e. automated brick laying, etc.	
Construction waste	• **To be determined**		
GREEN BUILDING MATERIALS			
Raw materials Recycle content	• To be determined. • % recycled content in concrete and other materials		

The headquarters of Energy Commission of Malaysia, which is known as the Diamond Building, in Putrajaya.