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Sabah should lead in Green Buildings: Masidi

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Kota Kinabalu: Sabah should take the lead in the Green Building Index (GBI) initiative, said Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Masidi Manjun.

He said as a Minister, he would be more than happy to support any move by the Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM) proposing for incentives in getting GBI certification.

Speaking at the launching of a "Green Building Index Forum" and "MS1525 - Code of Practice on Energy and Use of Renewable Energy for Non-Residential Buildings" at Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort and Spa here, Friday, Masidi said PAM should submit a proposal to the State Cabinet.

"Why wait for it to be done first in Kuala Lumpur if we could do it first?"

I think we in Sabah are too generous for no reason," he said, adding it is high time that the architects take the lead in this initiative.

He said in building a city the planners must make sure that it provides a conducive environment for people to live in.

"There is no use having a 50-storey building if people are not happy with it," he said.

In his speech, Masidi noted that the GBI developed by Malaysian architects and engineers was a professional-driven initiative to lead the property industry.

He was encouraged to note that the GBI had full support of all the players in the property, construction and housing industry.

"This goes to show that the Malaysian development and construction industry is ready to confront important critical issues such as global warming, carbon emissions and climate change," he said.

He said GBI helped to reduce consumption of energy, water and waste and, at the same time, boost the property value and investment in the long run. "It's something a smart person will do," he said.

He was pleased that the GBI forum would be preceded by a seminar focusing specifically on ways that architects and engineers could incorporate passive design features in order to comply with the Malaysian standards, MS1525.

The MS1525 is the minimum standards for energy efficiency in the design of new buildings and retrofit of the existing buildings as well as requiring buildings to have a good energy management system and encouraged the use of renewal energy.

"The Government of Sabah is fully supportive of efforts and initiatives for the development of green and sustainable buildings in Sabah.

We are looking at all possible avenues to encourage the development of new green and sustainable buildings as well as retrofit of the existing buildings into green buildings," he said.

PAM Chairman Boon Che Wee said green buildings should be seen as architecture of hope instead of architecture of fear.

"If we don't design and build green now, we will hasten climate change and cause further catastrophes to the world since buildings are said to consume over 32 per cent of the world's resources, including 12 per cent of its water, up to 40 per cent of its energy and account for 40 per cent of greenhouse gas emission," he said.

"I prefer to see green buildings as architecture of hope, because we do have the knowledge, the technology, the talent and most importantly, the opportunity now to design and build responsibly," he said.

He said building green remained the most sustainable strategy and perhaps the best hope to meet the challenge of global warming without dampening economic growth.

In fact, he said the green industry had been credited for lessening the impact and even drove the recovery of a number of the economies through the last crisis.

At the moment, he said PAM's team of volunteers was also working with the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers to complete the new rating for industrial buildings, which would be launched in the first quarter of next year.

This will be followed by the release in the second quarter, an appendix version of the non-residential rating for retail malls that is being reviewed with PPK, the High Rise and Shopping Complex Association, he said.

Also on hand were the PAM Sabah Chapter Chairman, Ho Jia Lit, and presidents and chairmen of other professional bodies.

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