

# Towards a global warming solution

Concerted effort required, encompassing entire supply chain of our daily lives



**GLOBAL** warming is increasing; Earth's surface temperature has risen 0.04°C a decade, we have unusual cold in the US, heavy rain in north Britain and have endured a dry spell in Asia for the past three months. This juxtaposition of warm and cold has fanned public doubt about climate change.

Singapore and Malaysia are grappling with some of the driest weather they have ever seen, forcing the tiny city-state to ramp up supplies of recycled water while Malaysia rations reserves amid disruptions to farming and fisheries.

In Peninsular Malaysia, 15 areas have not had rain in more than 20 days, with some dry for over a month. I believe the public's engagement with the global warming issue is crucial to addressing it. Solutions involve a long remedial process. The process of concerted effort to inhibit global warming concerns the entire supply chain of our daily lives, including our choice of home.

To effectively address global warming, we must significantly reduce the heat-trapping emissions we put into the atmosphere. The good news is we have the technology and practical solutions to accomplish this. As individuals, we can help by reducing our personal carbon emissions. To fully address global warming, we must demand action from stakeholders to support and implement a comprehensive set of climate solutions.

The Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM) and the Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia, which established the Green Building Index (GBI) in 2009, have led the drive for Malaysian properties to be more environment-friendly. It is Malaysia's green rating tool for buildings and townships, created to promote sustainability in



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the built environment and raise the awareness of environmental issues.

Purchasers should look for GBI certification for properties as a benchmark before they make their purchase. GBI-certified properties will fetch higher reserve values in future due to their being sustainable developments.

Prospective purchasers should also ask sales personnel to provide details of finishing specifications. Generally, minimal finishing is sufficient as excessive finishing is redundant and also means an increase

in manufacturing. Any increases in the supply chain expand the carbon footprint – not good practice. Purchasers should also look for green-label products certified by reputable laboratories at the property's sales office.

Green initiatives can also apply to our day-to-day life. Choosing the sensible path to a clean-energy economy is crucial. We can make the transition to a clean-energy economy today while protecting our climate, breaking our dependence on oil and putting more Malaysians back to work. What we need is a comprehensive set of smart policies to jump-start this transition without delay and maximise benefits to our environment and economy.

Today, seemingly everyone is addicted to an air-conditioned environment. I encourage people to limit their hours of air-conditioning use, enjoy the warm weather in Malaysia and start by planting more trees.

Tropical deforestation accounts for about 10% of the world's heat-trapping emissions – equivalent to the annual tailpipe emissions of 600 million average US cars. Reducing tropical deforestation can significantly lower the effects of global warming emissions and, with efforts to reduce emissions from fossil fuels, plays an integral role



in a comprehensive long-term solution to global warming.

I believe purchasers are willing to go further out of urban areas for their new homes; we can limit land clearing and encourage more greenbelt space in and out of cities. As the Malaysian government is preparing better public transport for cities, the choice of a suburb for a property should be considered.

As to why we need to choose to buy a green-rated home, it helps to reduce the heat trapped in urban or suburban areas, reduces pollution and is sustainable.

Sustainability is not confined to electricity and water consumption but includes the entire consumer supply chain. Initiatives revolve around the choice of building materials with green labels.

We can also limit the overuse of decorative interior materials and choose solar power to generate electricity

**Malaysia, grappling with very dry weather, is rationing water reserves amid disruptions to farming and fisheries**

with no pollution or global warming emissions.

We must be focused on adapting to solutions. So far, the GBI has certified 4.91 million sq ft of residential and condominium space. Of this, 30% is certified with a gold rating or better by the GBI, which has more stringent certification criteria than other rating tools in the world.

As our society becomes more affluent and consumers are more educated about rating certificates, their patterns of consumption change. Our young people of the middle class are looking for green features in new homes, aside from considering factors such as location, design and a reputable developer.

Not all supplies on the market are entirely sustainable developments.

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