



'Take advantage of tax incentives for green buildings'

Kan Yaw Chong

KOTA KINABALU: All developers of both new, existing buildings and industrial buildings in Sabah should start looking at and take advantage of the new tax incentives for green buildings the Government is offering, said Ir Chen Thiam Leong, the Malaysian Green Buildings Index Accreditation Panel Co-Chairman at a New Tax Incentives for Green Buildings seminar, Wednesday.

"In terms of Returns On Investment (ROI), it definitely pays, that's proven all over the world and we are here to try and convince Sabah to go green," Chen said categorically at the seminar brought here by Architect Services Centre Kuala Lumpur in collaboration with MIDA and MGBC.

He also claimed Malaysia has one of best tax incentives for green buildings in the world compared to the sporadic nature of similar schemes in other parts of the world, including the US.

"So far, 700 green building projects in Malaysia have registered to go green while more than 300 have already been certified green," he said.

"But where does Sabah stand out of this?" he asked

"The largest number of green buildings registered are in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, each of them has 200 plus projects but for Sabah, unfortunately you are about 6pc or 14 projects if I remember correctly," he pointed out.

"So I hope to see more because, yes it takes time but after going through the new incentives, you'll find out and realise who says it cost more – not necessarily."

"For certain grading, if you want to go super high end up to platinum of course you have to pay but your rewards are there but we are not encouraging you to go there straight away – go instead for the starting point and already you'll have a lot of returns," Chen asserted.

Asked to explain his claims it pays, mechanical engineer Chen said: "First of all, the past Chairman of World Green Building Council had already given statistics in terms of energy saving, in terms of value of buildings later on and in terms of ROI, it definitely pays. That's proven all over the world."



Chen

"Currently our statistics also shows the go green cost is not that much and the energy cost saving is really there. That alone you can see the payment," Chen said.

"The energy saving is very clear because it is already a proven real measurement of energy use in terms of what we call it building energy intensity, that is - how many kilowatts hour per sq metre per year," he noted further.

"The figures are already there. So from non-green to green you can see as you go higher and higher up the green ladder you spend a bit more but then you reduce energy so much," Chen noted.

Going green is also thinking ahead, he said.

"Subsidies the Government is going to let go one day – all the subsidies and you got to pay your own although we are lucky now oil prices are going down but imagine oil prices in the past how it can go very high," he said.

"But more important is don't just look at the energy alone," Chen said.

"We have to do our duty for the environment.

"Look at climate change, it's frightening."

"We know that we are in trouble if we don't do anything to the climate. You can see the weird climate now – very hot one moment, then you can suddenly have ridiculously cool weather and then all the storms everywhere, the flood you can see. Nobody can deny there is climate change right now," Chen told *Daily Express*.

Queried whether he truly believed climate change is confirmed, Chen said: "Yes, the facts are all there. Nowadays can you predict the climate? In the good old days you know exactly when it's going to be raining exactly when it's going to be hot," he said.

"I always joked and talked about Chinese culture 'kou wong ngui' about what will happen such as "In 10 days what will happen – the rains start and what not but nowadays it can reverse anything, there is no more trend already. So this is the reality you see today," Chen is definitive about the age of climate stress.

Asked if this is his reason he came to convince Sabah to go green, he said: "Yes, we must go there."

"And don't forget the advantage is all there. You see when you go green it's not just about energy saving alone, it's also about indoor environment quality – the quality to the occupants. You are healthy, you are more productive. So, it's a holistic approach."