

**OPENING ADDRESS BY
Y.B. DATO' WIRA CHOR CHEE HEUNG
MINISTER OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AT THE
LAUNCH OF THE GREEN BUILDING INDEX TOWNSHIP TOOL AND
RESIDENTIAL NEW CONSTRUCTION (VERSION II) TOOL**

**29 MARCH 2011
SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR**

Ar. Boon Chee Wee
President, Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM)
And Green Building Index Accreditation Panel,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. I wish to thank the organisers, Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) and the Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia (ACEM), for inviting me to officiate the launch of the Green Building Index Township Tool and Residential New Construction Tool (Version II) this afternoon.

2. As we are all aware, to achieve high-income status by 2020 is our national vision and all efforts of national developments have been designed, planned and implemented towards achieving that goal. However, in our earnest pursuit to achieve economic success, the issues of environmental protection and sustainable development

have been given due emphasis in the 10th Malaysian Plan. In fact, valuing our environmental endowments is one of the main guiding principles in formulating the programmes and projects under the 10th Malaysia Plan. Towards this end, construction of environmentally friendly townships and neighbourhoods are being encouraged. The introduction of the Green Building Index Township Tool and Residential New Construction Tool (Version II) is timely in contributing towards the achievement of this very important national agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Green Townships are livable places that meet the diverse needs of the community, both now and in the future. Green townships are integrated planned habitats. They focus on the architectural design and interior of the buildings as well as the living environment, as they emphasize on maximizing energy and resource savings; including the use and recycling of natural resources, besides promoting public health and general welfare of urban population and reducing negative impact on the environment. They should be well

landscaped and equipped with basic amenities, such as parks and playgrounds to encourage interaction and integration among local communities. They are also safe, secure and help enhance the surrounding environment, thus providing a high quality of life for the people who live, work and play there.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. In response to the emphasis given in the 10th Malaysia Plan, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government is taking steps to ensure that the needs of current and future communities are anticipated at the spatial planning stage. This is important to facilitate the rapid growth of urbanization which is expected to increase from **67.0% in 2010 to 75.0% by 2020** but at the same time, our natural environment will be well protected, preserved and even enhanced.

5. The **National Physical Plan (NPP)** together with the **National Urbanisation Policy (NUP)** has set several strategies, thrusts and policies to achieve integrated and sustainable housing and property development in the country. The areas that currently have greatest

growth potential, that is, the conurbations around Kuala Lumpur, George Town, Johor Bahru and Kuantan will be continuously promoted and strengthened as development magnets for Peninsular Malaysia in the future, conducive for housing and property investments.

6. Achieving sustainability will be the core principle and the prime aim of future land use and spatial planning at the national, state and local levels. In this regard, I would like to highlight that the following policies and strategies have been formulated and will be recommended for adoption by planning authorities and property players throughout the country:

- Optimise the use of land for urban development by encouraging **urban regeneration, infill development** and the **reuse of brown field sites in urban areas** to reduce the excavating of green field site;
- Directing urban expansion to areas where adequate infrastructure and social facilities are in place or committed to be built;

- Assess thoroughly the land required for urban development purposes, including for housing, by considering two factors, namely, the demand for land generated by the increase in urban population and an assessment of lands that could be made available for urban use without jeopardizing the integrity of key land uses, such as agricultural production for food security, biodiversity conservation and geo-hazard risk areas;
- Accommodate future housing needs within designated urban centres without the need for conversion of forest lands and environmentally sensitive areas to housing;
- The planning and housing authorities at the state level have to play their roles to ensure that information on property development, current and future projections are accurate, periodically published and transparent to all, especially to housing developers;

- Promote the policy to **bring people back to the city** by integrating the concepts of **`compact city'** and **`transit oriented development' (TOD)** as the basis of urban land use development to control urban sprawl.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. The efforts taken by local professionals to introduce the Malaysian rating system of Green Building Index (GBI) and Green Township Tool are commendable and in line with government's initiative to promote the Green Technology as a new driver for economic growth of the country. Green Technology offers enormous opportunities and potential in economic regeneration, innovation and wealth creation. I am most encouraged to note that local professional Architects and Engineers are at the forefront of these initiatives to green Malaysia.

8. I was made to understand that to date more than 150 projects have applied for GBI certification, and 20 projects have received their

GBI Provisional certification. From its inception in mid-2009, GBI had received full support from our local building and property players, including Government Ministries and Agencies. To incentivise the property industry to move towards becoming more environment-friendly, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia has introduced incentives for the GBI in the 2010 Budget, in the form of Tax Exemption and Stamp Duty Exemption, for buildings that achieve GBI certification.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. I am happy to note that the GBI was created to provide a common and verifiable building industry mechanism, to benchmark buildings within the Malaysian context. The GBI Township Tool takes this to another level and sets out a vision for sustainability within the built environment, to provide guidance for the state and local authorities, developers, builders and professionals to create sustainable townships.

10. The GBI Township Tool will enable the authorities, developers and the professional team to take an integrated approach towards

addressing the three (3) pillars of sustainability, i.e. environmental, social and economic factors relevant to the creation of a sustainable township. It will provide an opportunity for the application of a public-private smart partnership approach, throughout the development process, and will help the developers and professional teams to plan, design, build, manage and operate sustainable townships.

11. For the long term sustainability of our society, we must look beyond the construction of green buildings. The three pillars of sustainability i.e. the environmental, the social and the economic must be addressed holistically. To this end, I must congratulate PAM and ACEM for their initiatives in introducing this GBI Township Tool (version II) to take the green transformation to the next level, in line with plans under the Government's New Economic Model, to become a high-income nation that is both inclusive and sustainable by year 2020.

12. This professional and industry-driven rating tool is both timely and significant, as it promotes a holistic approach for the sustainable development of townships. The GBI Township Tool, as an enabling

tool, will set in place from the initial planning stage the Green Building index certification for all new buildings within the township, thus contributing to our efforts to address the effects of climate change, and the need to create a green and sustainable environment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. Apart from the new GBI Township Tool, through the feedback received, and consultation with key stakeholders over the last six (6) months, I understand that the Residential New Construction (Version II) Tool is now ready to be launched.

14. On that note, I am pleased to officially launch the Green Building Index Township Tool and the Residential New Construction (Version II) Tool.

Thank you.