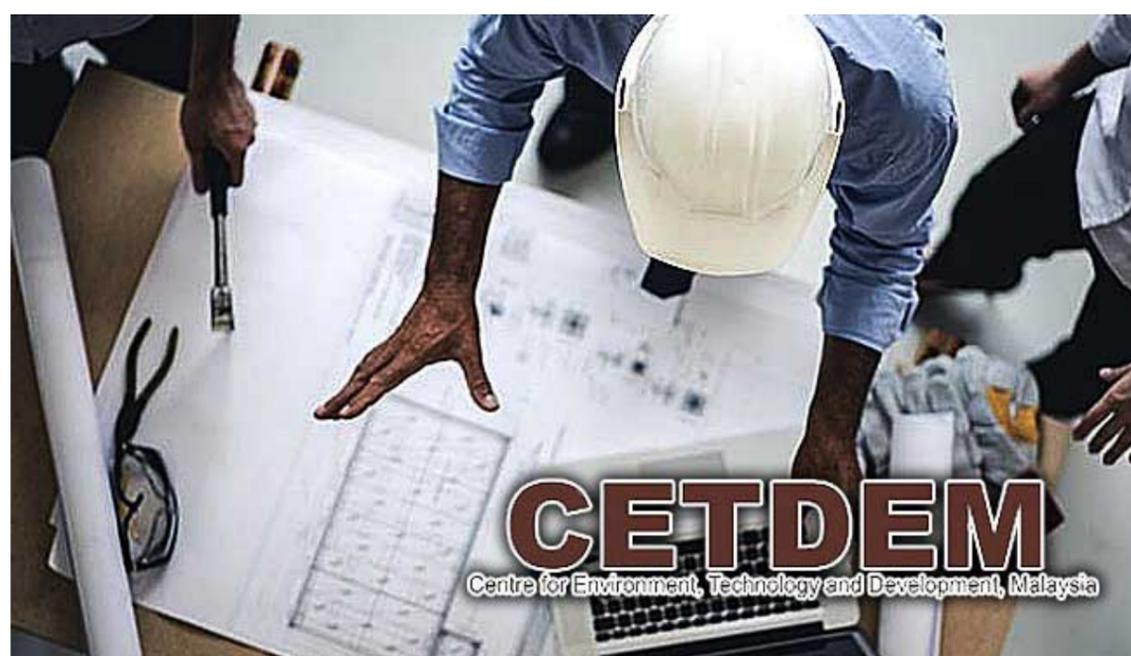


## Redevelop old buildings, leave green spaces alone, developers urged

Nur Khairah Alegria Suner | Friday, June 30, 2017

Centre for Environment, Technology and Development Malaysia says developers should strike a balance between catering to demand and preserving nature.



PETALING JAYA: An environmentalist says a comprehensive development plan should be drafted before any construction is done on green and public spaces.

Centre for Environment, Technology and Development Malaysia (Cetdem) executive director Anthony Tan Kee Huat says property developers should lay out detailed construction plans which would ensure society's green lungs were not jeopardised.

"We only look at how development will benefit human beings," Tan told FMT.

"What about nature and the implications of development on pre-existing animals at the park?"

According to Tan, property developers should strike a balance between catering to demand and preserving nature.

"We have to weigh the cost of ecology. Unfortunately, the ringgit sign weighs more than nature does," he said.

Tan added that developers should consider how to preserve the flora and fauna while developing the country.

"If they plan to build on green spaces, they should consider allocating a new green space for pre-existing animals and ensure that it is the same as the previous green space that they took," he said.

Plans to commercialise spaces such as Bukit Kiara Park have raised public concerns as well as anger among Taman Tun Dr Ismail residents who have grown fond of the park.

Parcels of land have been sold to developers who are planning to build commercial or residential high-rise buildings on them.

Tan claimed that sketchy property developments by greedy and selfish developers had not only stripped several public parks but had also resulted in abandoned projects.

"There were many occasions where public spaces were developed. However in some cases, something went wrong and these buildings were abandoned just like that. It is a waste," he claimed.

Bukit Beruntung is a good example of a poorly constructed development plan as many abandoned buildings and scanty infrastructure can be seen despite numerous efforts to revitalise the township.

Speaking about property demands, Tan suggested that the government consider redeveloping and "rejuvenating" old buildings instead of sacrificing green and public spaces.

"Why target public spaces? They should consider developing old buildings instead," he said.

However, Tan also acknowledged the existence of several construction developments which strive for energy conservation to limit greenhouse effects.

In 2015, it was reported that 95 projects and buildings had achieved the Green Building Index certification for their eco-friendly designs to limit greenhouse gas emissions from buildings.

Several buildings in Malaysia also won Asean awards for their green designs and initiatives.

They are the energy, green technology and water ministry's building, the Energy Commission Building in Putrajaya and the Securities Commission Building in Kuala Lumpur.

But Tan warned that green technology alone is not enough to limit carbon footprints.

"We need to conserve green spaces. We still need trees and nature. If not, we will end up being a concrete jungle," he said.