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K U A L A L U M P U R C I T Y H A L L

BALANCED, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPORTANT TO CITIES

- YAB DATUK SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI

Some cities especially those in poor developing countries have been marginalized and find themselves outside the stream and network of global economy due to inadequate information and other factors such as economic, social and political reasons.

Stating this at the INTA28 – World Urban Development Congress meeting under the theme “Metropolisation : Integration or Disintegration?”, The Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said, “These cities are unable to operate successfully in the global marketplace and fall behind. Cities need to be resilient in the face of globalization.”

They have to increase their competitiveness by lowering production cost and increase productivity, develop a knowledge-based economy and establish an efficient public sector.

The Prime Minister also said that development does not occur only between countries, between regions, states, cities and towns in a country, but also between areas in the cities and towns. Some areas have fallen behind in the mainstream of development.

There are under developed areas with poor living conditions and inadequate infrastructures and services. It is so common, especially in developing countries, to find that just a stones throw from the city's most developed area, lies depressed and ageing areas. Cities and towns, he added, must implement balanced development.

YAB Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also cautioned



YAB Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, The Prime Minister of Malaysia.- Photo KL City News

participants that while economic and physical infrastructure development is important, this must be balanced with the social and environmental development.

To achieve balanced, equitable and sustainable development, we must equally emphasize on social development for the citizens, the rich and the poor, children, youth and senior citizens to enhance their quality of life.

The citizens must be able to work and live in a safe and secure environment, in peace and harmony. To be sustainable, cities must be culturally and socially vibrant and should avoid from being termed as “cities without soul” or a “cultural desert”. Culture and arts should be nurtured and promoted to enhance the quality of life of city residents and also as tourist products.

City living needs joyful creativity and celebration of city life such as festivals, carnivals etc. Cultural, social and recreational facilities should be accessible to all residents. Cities must promote social cohesiveness through community and social programmes. A distinctive city identity must also be developed to serve as a magnet to attract people from around the world.

Poverty eradication through various strategies and programmes should be implemented for social justice, peace and stability. One of the strategies to reduce urban poverty is to also concentrate with equal emphasis on agricultural and rural development to stem rural migration of people to cities and towns.

The challenge, said YAB Datuk Seri Abdullah is how to mobilize resources and to adopt effective methods, approaches and mechanisms of urban planning and management for the achievement of urban sustainable development.

One of the key challenges of metropolitan areas is the



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah bin Hj. Ahmad Badawi, striking a traditional gong to declare the INTA28 World Urban Development Congress officially open. Behind him on the left is His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Mbarki, President of INTA and Brig. Jen. Datuk Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufek, Mayor of Kuala Lumpur.- Photo KL City News

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From the Mayor's Desk

In the course of my daily duties as Mayor of the premier city Kuala Lumpur, I am confronted with a multitude and multifaceted array of problems and issues. Most of the time, with the help and support of my staff, we are somewhat able to solve most, if not all the problems quite speedily.

In resolving the problems, we are able to please some and not others. These form a minority but are most voluble in their criticism and dissatisfaction. At times, they are aided by some of the media, who themselves have not heard both sides of the story and argument.

Of recent times, two issues have hogged a local afternoon tabloid. One is pertaining to the 2.00 am closing time for entertainment outlets in Bangsar and the other related to the Lorong Basung Bukit Damansara high-rise condominium project.

With regards to the Bangsar ruling, it was carried out due to protests from the Local Residents Association, representations made by the Member of Parliament and Minister for Women, Family And Community Development, Datuk Seri Shahrizat bt. Abdul Jalil, Minister for Federal Territories, Tan Sri Hj. Mohd. Isa bin Dato' Hj. Abdul Samad, the mosque committee and other parties.

Action was also taken to close down or take drastic action on those who flouted or violated the licencing regulation. (Premise, entertainment and liquor licences). Some have been conducting business without a licence or either one of the licences for quite some time, although enforcement action has been taken on numerous occasions. However, the Law must take its course.

City Hall's ruling was well accepted by the majority including the business committee represented by the Bangsar Baru Business Council. Except for an afternoon English daily, most if not all the print media gave positive reports. It must be borne in mind, that the Bangsar business area is very close to the residential area and the sentiments and sensitivities of the residents must be given due attention.

With regards to the Bukit Damansara high rise condominium project, City Hall has yet to make a decision on the project, the due process is still ongoing. Some parties have "jumped the gun" and have made premature conclusions on the whole issue.

I would like to inform all parties concerned that City Hall cannot prevent any private land owner from developing his property. This must be done in accordance with the existing laws, rules and regulations governing such developments. In this regard, the Land Office is also involved.

I would also like to stress here, that City Hall must have valid, tenable and justifiable reasons for not approving a project or development on a private property, failing which, City Hall would be exposing itself to litigation and legal recourse by the owner of the property. This may result in City Hall being sued by the owner.

I hope journalists and the media understand City Hall's position and report fairly without jeopardizing any ones right and interest.

All of us must acknowledge and understand that the situation in the city over the last 30 - 40 years and now is totally different. Development has to take place, while taking into cognizance the rights and privileges of its various stakeholders.

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search for effective administrative models for metropolitan governance. The three common models are

- a) Polycentric;
- b) Unitary; and
- c) Two tier system models

Polycentric model comprises of one-level of government consisting of several Local Authorities for different administrative units and larger scale problems and issues are dealt with by means of regional committees or bodies.

In a unitary model, there is one level of government consisting of a single city or metropolitan government covering the entire metropolitan areas, and smaller problems and issues are dealt with by administrative decentralization.

Two tier system model comprises of two levels of government : one for metropolitan areas as a whole and the other consisting of several Local Authorities for different administrative units.

The system in Malaysia is that of polycentric model, in which we have different authorities for different administrative units. We do not have a metropolitan government like the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration or Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The Federal Government and the various State Governments control and coordinate the Local Authorities under



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi being briefed by officials of a private sector housing project. On his left is H.E Mr. Mohamed Mbaraki.- Photo KL City News

them.

YB Datuk Seri Abdullah also stated that a city cannot exist by itself; it has to live among a community of cities and nations, especially in the increasing globalised world.

There is a need to enhance the bilateral and multilateral cooperation among cities, to exchange views, ideas and experiences in urban planning and management. Cooperation and collaboration should be strengthened and intensified for the mutual benefit of all parties.

The Prime Minister also stated that the Malaysian government was promoting the concept of Islam Hadhari as a balanced approach to development. Islam Hadhari encourages noble values such as good morals, ethics and integrity.

He also stated that the National Integrity Plan has been launched and the Malaysian Institute of Integrity established to monitor the implementation of the Plan.

The Prime Minister also visited an exhibition put up by Communication and Urban Infrastructure Development Companies in conjunction with the INTA28 Congress.

CITY HALL BUDGET 2005

Fifty five agencies and organizations turned up at the four dialogue sessions held in late June and early July 2004 to get feedback and inputs for the preparation of the 2005 Budget for Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

92 agencies/organizations comprising Non-Governmental Organisations, Residents Associations, Religious, Youth, Women, Malaysian Trade Union Organisations and others were invited. Only 55 Organisations/ Associations turned up with 102 representatives.

Four committees were set up to hear the public views and suggestions. They were:

- Social Community and Religion;
- Economy and Development;
- Culture, Arts, Tourism and Sports; and
- Senior Citizens and Handicapped



A participant at the dialogue session putting forth his views- Photo KL City News

163 issues and topics were discussed and debated, ranging from infrastructure, housing, economy, social and other development areas.

City Hall has already attended to most of the issues raised while some are in the process of being implemented or in the planning stage. City Hall will look into the new issues raised in formulating its Budget. The 2005 Budget will be a "people friendly" one.

DEVELOPMENT AT JALAN MASJID INDIA

The hoardings currently, blocking the entrance to the Masjid India, will be removed once construction work in the area is completed. The main road leading to the mosque will be expanded from 10 metres to 20 metres giving an even better visibility to the mosque while also facilitating movement of worshippers to the mosque.



The colourful and transparent high roof with a textile theme nearing completion. The stalls will move in soon and be operational for the Ramadan.- Photo KL City News

The height of the structures being put up is between 9.5 till 17 metres equivalent to a 2_ storey to 4 storey building. Only six iron pillars with a diameter of 0.3 metres is used in front of the mosque. The pillars are spaced 7.2 meters apart.

The above construction does not block the view of the front façade of the mosque. However, the use of the covered poly carbonate roofing will be reviewed as it partly blocks the view of the mosque's minaret.

Construction work started on 15 December 2003 and is expected to be completed by 15 October 2004. To facilitate construction work, 143 unlicensed hawkers and locked stalls were moved to a site near the Central Market (*Benteng Lama*) since 8 January 2004. All the hawkers are expected to move in once construction work is completed before Ramadan.

NEWS IN BRIEF

* The Midvalley Commuter Station opened its doors to the public on 23rd August 2004. The halt which links the MidValley Megamall with Rawang, Seremban dan Port Klang received good response from public on its first day of operation with about 600 passengers using it until midnight.

The halt operates from 6.30 am to 11.30 pm daily. To ensure a hassle free journey, trains will depart every 20 minute on weekdays and every 30 minute during weekends.

The RM12 million-disabled friendly facility is anticipated to reduce traffic congestion in the area, which is able to reach a capacity of 15,000 shoppers on weekends and holidays. Apart from that, the public can have direct access to MidValley Megamall on foot as it has a covered overhead bridge, which connects the halt to MidValley Megamall.

* Vacant buildings and premises which are unkept, dirty, covered with undergrowth and are a source of rodents and vectors and eysores will be slapped with a compound notice for causing / being a public nuisance. They are also a nuisance to neighbours.

Under Section 82, Local Authorities Act (1976) anyone violating or not conforming to the provision of the Act within a specified period of time are committing an offence.

They can be fined not more than RM1000 or jailed not exceeding six months or both. In 2003, a total of 109 complaints were received for public nuisance while in 2004 (until September) 77 cases were reported.

A sinkhole caused by broken underground drainage pipes brought traffic to a crawl at the road besides the Perdana Lake Garden just after the Lake Club leading to Jalan Mahameru and Jalan Duta on 26 September 2004. The two metres wide sinkhole, which nearly trapped a car is currently being repaired, by replacing the 50 year olds pipes with box culverts. The repair work is expected to be completed in about 2 weeks.

* 1,400 staff of City Hall received "Excellent Service Awards" personally from the Mayor, Brig. General Datuk Mohamad Shaid Bin Mohd Taufek at a mass-ceremony held at the Stadium Titiwangsa on 13 September 2004.

The award recipients for the year 2003/2004 comprised of employees from all categories working in City Hall. They received a commendation certificate and prize money amounting to RM1, 000 each.

In his address to the recipients of the awards, the Mayor called upon them to be loyal to the organization and hoped that with the winning of the awards it would spur them to work harder.

He also encouraged the staff to continue with their education and to improve themselves academically by following courses, seminars and talks relevant to their area of work. For those who have not received an award, it did not mean that they were no good. They would have to strive harder and will be recognized for their performance in future.

Later at a Press Conference, the Mayor said that staff should work guided by five principles, which were:

- Work in line with Government's strategies;
- No compromise on performance;
- High level of discipline;
- Working closely with colleagues and stop bad mouthing about others; and
- Finding satisfaction at work.

Senior officials from City Hall also attended the award presentation ceremony.