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# PREFACE

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## **Sustainable urban development: Built environment in focus**

Today, with more than half of the world population residing in urban areas, urban development has become an extremely significant global phenomenon and this trend continues. Due to the scale and speed, the urban development offers both opportunities and challenges. Through the phenomena such as the concentration of population, buildings, infrastructures, innovation and industry, cities and urban growth centres significantly produce economic growth and offer vast majority of employment opportunities, which subsequently contributes to poverty reduction. Cities are also the centres of modern living where indicators of general health and wellbeing, literacy, technological advancement, culture and social mobility are typically highest. The growth, however, has been not without challenges. Urban development brings congestion and pollution, social segregation and traffic gridlock. It also escalates the environmental and social risks. Today, cities consume 80% of the energy generated worldwide and are responsibility for around 85% of global GHG emissions. Due to this significance, for the first time, sustainable urban development becomes one of the key agendas in the newly announced SDGs (#11).

This special issue of Planning Malaysia gathers a total of thirteen articles contributed by the scholars from rich range of the Built Environment disciplines to address and shares the issues and possible solutions contributing to the sustainable development of urban future. For that, we divide them into six broad themes, which include urban environment as its core, demographic-focused studies on the elderly, sectoral research into housing and labour supply in construction industry, mobility for urban living with different groups of community, building level sustainability and conservation as part of urban development resiliency.

The urban environment theme consists of three articles with different focus. "Sustainable urban development through urban consolidation policy in Shiraz, Iran" highlights the initiatives at policy level, followed by "An initiative based assessment frame for smart city" which outlines the measurable indicators for a smart city. The authors of "Environmental psychology: The urban built environment impact on human mental health" on the other hand, explores the psychological dimensions of built environment impact.

The second theme is the demographic study with special attention given to the elderly group. "Elderly policy framework and active ageing in Malaysia" reviews the policy required for active ageing and sustainable neighbourhood design for elderly while the distribution of existing health care facilities for elderly is addressed in "Elderly and community health care facilities: A spatial analysis".

Sectoral research papers included in this special issue are "Sustainable housing affordability in East Malaysia" where the authors focus on the trade-off of building affordability housing in the case of Sabah, and "The challenge of labour shortage for sustainable construction" brings up the factors influencing the labour supply in construction industry and the possible solutions.

Interestingly, both the papers "Incorporating walking in travel to work: An insight from the Kuala Lumpur community" and "Campus walkability in Malaysian public universities: A case study of University of Malaya" despite targeting on different user groups, highlight the importance of walkability under the mobility in urban environment theme.

Sustainability at building level is discussed in three articles i.e. "Prevention of Aedes breeding habitats for urban high-rise building in Malaysia", "Energy efficiency policy for existing typical campus buildings in the University of Malaya" and "Preferences of student residents towards sustainability with the concept of bioclimatic design". The first article highlights the environmental health issue faced in urban areas in Malaysia while the second article explores the formulation of Energy Management System as the possible option for energy saving at campus level. The third article discloses the feedback on the concept of bioclimatic design at the level of student residential building.

Last but not least, is the paper on "Synthesising an effective incentives system in safeguarding heritage village in world heritage site of Melaka and George Town" that summarises the constraints to the existing incentive programs in the world cultural heritage sites of Malaysia and recommends the way of moving forward.

In terms of geographical coverage, the special issue includes mainly the case studies in Malaysia, but without failing, to include Australia and Iran, thanks for our colleagues' fruitful international collaboration. Within the country, we have articles researching on Kuala Lumpur and specifically into our beloved campus of the University of Malaya, apart from reaching far to the Malaysia Borneo.

In short, this special issue intends to send a clear message about sustainable urban environment that it covers a wide range of disciplines and should be approached holistically in an integrated manner. While we strive into researching the individual disciplines with solid arguments through empirical evidence, we also recognise the necessity to embed the socio economic factors into the urban spatial application under one umbrella. For that, we have transformed our knowledge to the next level, more need to be done. As a continuation of the Special Edition issue, the future edition may look into the symbiosis of the built and natural environment in meeting the total sustainability of the urban development. As for now, happy reading, planners at heart, planners at work!