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Sustainable Construction – Paramount for reconstruction of NE

Continued from yesterday
By Dakshitha Thalagodapitiya

Use of sustainable design and construction methods will help to provide higher quality Buildings that use less water and energy and have wider environmental and health benefits. Good sustainable construction will also deliver developments with lower running costs. Socially and environmentally responsible approaches will minimize green house gas emissions and assist recycling of materials through the use of renewable energy technology. Use of sustainably produced and local / indigenous material can reduce the environmental impact of natural resource consumption.

Sustainable construction techniques are becoming increasingly important in development with building regulations covering many aspects of sustainable construction resulting in those who do not maintain minimum standards being subjected to punitive action. It is regretted that very little has been done by the relevant authorities in Sri Lanka with sustainable construction not even

being in their diction.

In the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the North and East, it is sincerely hoped that application of sustainable construction techniques will be made mandatory in new developments and in the refurbishment and renewal of existing buildings. This will undoubtedly minimize the detrimental social and environmental impacts of development and possibly bring about enhancements as well. Developers, Contractors, Householders, Businessmen, Decision Makers, Investors, Local Authorities and Members of Civil Society must in unison promote adoption of policies and best practices of sustainable construction. Information must be disseminated on the benefits of sustainable construction and construction technology to minimize consumption of scarce material, emission of green house gases and generation of waste.

The construction of new townships should;

- Favour sustainable transport and reduce car dependence by

reducing car usage through cost effective and comfortable linkages to public transport.

- Contribute to the creation of

- Maximize access to community, cultural and lesser facilities.

- Maximize opportunities for



sustainable communities through mixed use development – maximize the mixed housing types and tenures and availability of affordable housing in terms of local needs.

local businesses, local labour and training.

- Maximize opportunities for local procurement and Micro and SME Sector involvement. In planning and implementa-

tion of projects in the region to be reawakened, highest priority should be given to optimizing efficient use of land and buildings and supply of sustainable energy, minimizing waste generation while conserving water and other natural resources in addition to protection and enhancement of bio-diversity.

New knowledge relating to environmental fields and addressing causes of environmental degradation is developing at a very rapid pace. Continued professional development and training of construction industry personnel thus becomes a necessity. While Government should not be held solely responsible for sustainable construction, adoption of best practices and standards and introduction of regulations and a legal framework to facilitate its enforcement are responsibilities of the Government. Participation of key stakeholders such as clients, developers, contractors, town planners and architects, suppliers and the general public and adoption of an integrated approach are essential to bring

about necessary advancements to the construction industry and the living environment.

Sustainable construction encompasses a whole range of issues and techniques, all geared to mitigate or minimize adverse environmental and social aspects while contributing to creation of a high quality urban environment and enhancement of the quality of life and living standards of a community which has suffered for over three decades. The Construction Industry, its multiple stakeholders and more importantly those who determine the national policy have a primary obligation and responsibility to facilitate sustainable construction in reconstruction and rehabilitation of the North and East.

The writer is a former Chairman/CEO of Sri Lanka Land Reclamation and Development Corporation, River Valleys Development Board and Lanka Machine Leasers (Pvt) Ltd. and presently serving as a Director of Colombo Stock Exchange. Concluded.