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Pragmatic guidelines make for safe hillslope development

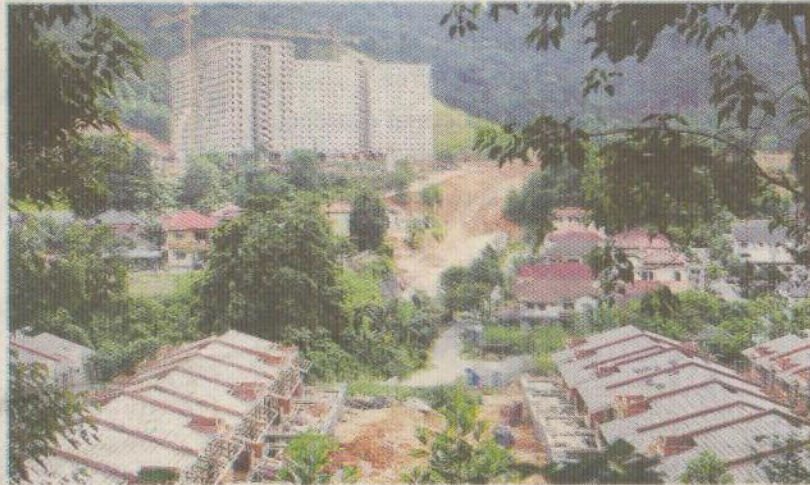
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I WOULD like to congratulate the Ministry of Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing for taking the practical and rational approach to hillslope development. It cannot be more emphatically repeated that technology allows development to be carried out almost anywhere, even on the moon, if so desired. With proper guidelines and enforcement, the perceived danger is only the ghost of the past.

Gary Yeoh in his letter published in *Streets* on Sept 17 has clearly pointed out that in Hong Kong, the Geotechnical Engineering Organisation (GEO) has enabled hillslopes to be developed safely based on their stringent development and maintenance requirements to "ensure high standards are kept on hillslope development".

He has clearly understood that it is not technology but design and maintenance that are important for hillslope development.

There are now a multi-layer of regulations and approvals required for hillslope development from JKR Cawangan Kejuruteraan Cerun, Ikram, Ministry of Housing Guidelines and now the additional guidelines from the Ministry of Federal Territories and



A hillslope development in Ukay Perdana.

Urban Wellbeing. These guidelines and approvals have made hillslope development onerous and thoroughly scrutinised and there should not be any grounds for residents to question the integrity and professionalism of all these approving authorities.

The underlying objections, apart from a general opposition to hillslope

development is the Not-In-My-Backyard selfish syndrome of wanting neighbouring private land to be kept undeveloped and kept green for their selfish enjoyment.

Of course, development will entail a higher density and generate more traffic. The solution is not to stop development but to address the need for an

efficient and dependable public transport service and for the authorities to carry out proper maintenance of all gazetted and planned green areas and parks.

It is absurd to argue that the density should not increase and instead push for further suburban development. Developed countries have realised the mistakes of suburbia sprawl and are now encouraging higher density development within city limits and creating compact living cities instead.

Our most developed region, the Klang Valley, has a population of merely 2.5 million while New York, London, Paris and Shanghai have populations in the tens of millions but are still recognised as world-class liveable cities.

It will be laughable if we think that the Klang Valley is over-developed and we cannot solve or cope with the challenges that come with further development.

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