

Urban Biodiversity Conference 2025 Sparks Dialogue on How Cities and Nature Can Thrive Together

- The inaugural Urban Biodiversity Conference 2025 urges greater integration of biodiversity in city planning, backed by cross-sector collaboration and measurable frameworks;
- Drawing close to 600 industry leaders and policymakers, the conference demonstrated wide-ranging support for the sustainability agenda.

KUALA LUMPUR, 5 August 2025 – The inaugural Urban Biodiversity Conference (“UBC”) 2025 has called for nature to be placed at the centre of urban development, urging policymakers, businesses and communities to invest in ecosystems as critical infrastructure for climate resilience, economic progress and liveability.

Themed ‘Coexistence: Shared Environments for Balance and Resilience,’ the conference was graced by Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Raja Muda Selangor Tengku Amir Shah Ibni Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj who gave his royal address, emphasising that youth must be empowered to champion biodiversity, as they are the key to sustaining Malaysia’s natural heritage into the future. His Royal Highness also noted that urban biodiversity is not about returning cities to the forest, but about intelligently designing our built environments to work in tandem with natural systems, and it is timely to think beyond five-year plans.

Renowned economist and best-selling author Professor Mariana Mazzucato delivered the keynote address titled “A Mission-Oriented Approach to Climate, Biodiversity and Water.” Her address challenged conventional economic thinking, calling for a bold, collaborative model that treats climate, biodiversity, and water not as afterthoughts but as central to how we define and deliver public value. She urged both the public and private sectors to move beyond reactive ‘market-fixing’ and instead shape markets proactively – catalysing cross-sectoral innovation and investment to tackle our most urgent environmental challenges.

The conference deepened the conversation with a strong line-up of local and international experts. Dr. Lena Chan, Former Senior Director of the International Biodiversity Conservation Division at Singapore’s National Parks, shared how

integrating biodiversity into homes, workplaces, and public spaces is not just about aesthetics, but essential for human health and wellbeing. Drawing from decades of work in biophilic design, she offered practical ideas for making nature a seamless part of urban life.

Afzaa Aziz, Specialist Consultant at Rika Reka, highlighted lessons from the Elmina Urban Biodiversity Corridor, showing how native ecosystems can be restored in city environments. Adj. Prof. Ar. Dr. Tan Loke Mun, who is the Director of ArchiCentre Sdn. Bhd. and DTLM Design Group Sdn. Bhd. explored how adaptability and co-existence will shape the future of cities in the face of accelerating environmental and technological change.

Panel discussions then explored how urban growth can align with environmental stewardship and how investment in nature can deliver long-term economic value. In the first panel, speakers including Dato' Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Mayor of Kuala Lumpur, Dato' Shah Redza Hussein, Chief Executive Officer of Malaysia Forest Fund, Dr. Dzaeman Dzulkifli, Executive Director of Tropical Rainforest Conservation and Research Centre, and David Mizan Hashim, Group President and Director of VERITAS Design Group, examined strategies for creating futureproof cities where development and biodiversity can thrive in tandem.

The second panel featuring Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar, Chairman of Cypark Resources Berhad, Dato' Rizal Rickman Ramli, Deputy President & Group Chief Executive of Permodalan Nasional Berhad ("PNB"), Tan Sri Shahril Ridza Ridzuan, Chairman of Axiata Group Berhad, and Mak Joon Nien, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Malaysia, discussed the economic case and value of urban biodiversity, and how it can reduce risk, and support long-term growth.

The day concluded with a thought-provoking fireside chat featuring Yang Amat Berhormat Deputy Prime Minister Dato' Sri Haji Fadillah Yusof, who also delivered the closing remarks. The session, titled "Malaysia's Green Leap," explored whether nature-based solutions could serve as real economic drivers, challenging participants to consider sustainability not as an ideal, but as a viable strategy for growth.

The UBC2025 attracted close to 500 participants comprising federal and state policymakers and agencies, city planners, environmental experts, industry players, non-governmental organisations and community leaders, signalling wide support for the sustainability agenda.

Dato' Seri Azmir Merican, Group Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of Sime Darby Property Berhad ("Sime Darby Property"), in his opening address said, "This conference is an initiative to establish the business case for making urban biodiversity a core part of our urban development. As developers, it may seem counterintuitive to talk about biodiversity, but that's precisely why we must. What we build is important, but how we build it matters just as much. If we are to meet the demands of growing cities while addressing climate and ecological realities, nature must be part of the plan, not an afterthought."

UBC will be a recurring platform to benchmark progress and scale impact, while aligning with Malaysia's built environment and biodiversity targets. Dato' Seri Azmir added, "It is important to note that business profitability and sustainability must go hand-in-hand. Healthy and profitable companies invest in doing good, and in doing so, build long-term value beyond the balance sheet. We must recognise that restoring ecosystems, not just preserving them, creates better-performing cities that attract capital, talent and investment while raising the quality of life for all."

Through dedicated platforms like UBC, the call for policies, investments and designs that place nature at the heart of resilient, future-ready cities reinforce the need for collective action towards making biodiversity a foundation of sustainable urban development.

UBC2025 was organised by Sime Darby Property, held at the Sime Darby Convention Centre ("SDCC"), Kuala Lumpur.

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About Sime Darby Property Berhad

With over 50 years of experience, Sime Darby Property leads in creating master-planned communities, setting the benchmark for quality, innovation, and sustainability in residential, integrated and high-rise projects within its 25 townships and developments across Malaysia.

As it transitions into a real estate company by 2025, the company drives the industrial and logistics segment in Elmina Business Park, Bandar Bukit Raja, and Hamilton Nilai City. Propelling its recurring income portfolio, Sime Darby Property is also the first public-listed property developer in Malaysia to venture into the creation of development funds in the industrial and logistics sector.

The company has pledged to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050, referencing the science-based target of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. A consistent champion for biodiversity, Sime Darby Property is a constituent of the MSCI ACWI Small Cap Index with an MSCI ESG Rating of BBB, is rated by the Carbon Disclosure Project, and has been re-included in both the FTSE4Good Bursa Malaysia Index and the FTSE4Good Bursa Malaysia Shariah Index, affirming its commitment to strong ESG practices.

Part of the respectable Malaysian consortium that successfully regenerated the iconic Battersea Power Station in the United Kingdom, Sime Darby Property also owns the multi-award-winning Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club, which hosts the prestigious PGA-sanctioned Maybank Championship.

Driven by its Purpose to be a Value Multiplier for people, businesses, economies, and the planet, Sime Darby Property, through its philanthropic arm, Yayasan Sime Darby, continuously creates positive social impacts for the communities it serves.

Sime Darby Property has been recognised as Malaysia's number one property developer at 'The Edge Malaysia's Top Property Developers Awards 2024', with other notable achievements, including Gold and Silver wins at the prestigious FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence Awards 2023, All-Stars at the StarProperty Awards 2024, a number one ranking for the Top of The Chart Award in the RM1 billion and above market capitalisation category at the Malaysia Developer Awards 2024, a Top 10 Developers (Malaysia) Award at the BCI Asia Awards 2024, a Platinum ranking in the Property Development category at the Putra Brand Awards 2023, and a People's Choice Award at the PropertyGuru Asia Awards Malaysia 2024. Apart from that, Sime Darby Property is listed on the Fortune Southeast Asia 500 list, one of only 89 Malaysian companies to be featured on the inaugural listicle.

For more information, log on to www.simedarbyproperty.com

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