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Incorporate environmental planning into economic development, says Razali

PENANG, Sat. - Being one of the country's smaller States, Penang can manage a sustainable policy that incorporates environmental planning into economic development, Tan Sri Razali Ismail said today.

The special adviser to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the State Government should first review its economic, sectoral and environmental policies, and develop mechanisms to facilitate involvement of various groups and individuals, to allow integration of environmental and development issues at all levels of decision-making.

He said the State Government should implement plans and policies that emphasises on "greening" economic activities on a sector by sector basis, be it for industry, agriculture, tourism or construction.

Razali said this when addressing about 200 people at the inaugural Penang Lecture on "Sustainable Development in Penang: Progress Prospects" at Shangri-La Hotel here today.

Among those present were Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas and his wife Toh Puan Majimor Shariff.

The lecture was organised by the Socio-Economic and Environment Research Institute (Seri) which is a think-tank for the State Government in formulating public development plans and strategies.

He also pointed out that the rapid growth industrial estates had destroyed natural habitats such as marine life and mangrove areas, while the hotel industry has spoilt sea water quality.

Rapid urbanisation, he said, had caused massive traffic congestion and smoke emission which had been identified as the major source of pollution in the State.

He suggested that it was timely for the Government to encourage private companies to include the social and environment costs in balance sheets, and promote green productivity and use cleaner technology.

"The State Government can move a step forward by offering attractive incentives to companies which practises and innovate green productivity," said Razali.