

Conference Report: World Housing Congress 2007, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia, 1-5 July

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Since the last four decades, housing industry in Malaysia experience development and it is recognized that it plays the key role in economic growth and urban development. The main objective of the Government of Malaysia is to provide Malaysians of all income levels accessibility to adequate, affordable and quality housing. So, Housing Research Center (HRC) is formed in 1996 at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) to help the Government and the public to conduct research on Housing. Part of its activities is organizing conferences and HRC has actively organized many national conferences. To mark the 10 years of the establishment of HRC (1996-2006), the center organized the World Housing Congress 2007 on Affordable Quality Housing (AQH). The World Housing Congress 2007 is jointly organized by the HRC, the UPM, the Federation of Engineering Institutions of Islamic Countries (FEIC), Saudi Council of Engineers (SCE), Terengganu State Government, and the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB). The objective of the Congress is to provide a platform for sharing knowledge and expertise as well as interaction amongst experts, researchers, designers, builders, developers and policy makers from all over the world in the area of affordable quality housing.

More than 100 international and local participants and paper presenters attended the congress. The presented papers at the World Engineering Congress 2007 (WEC2007) are divided into the following four themes:

1. Planning, Architectural Design and Indoor Environment
2. Structural Engineering, Foundation, Infrastructure and Utilities
3. Construction, IT & Expert System and Standardization
4. Social, Financial and Legal Aspects

The papers presented in the WHC2007 are expected to contribute in solving the problems encountered in housing industry. This is because Malaysia still faces an acute shortage of housing units due to continuous migration of people to economic centers in urban areas. Also, huge efforts are required for relocation and rehabilitation of squatters, and to counter the growing public concern on healthy living environment. Moreover, there are issues of legislation and finance which are becoming crucial determinants to accessibility to affordable quality housing. Affordability and living comfort are inter-twined, requiring intense R&D effort and smart innovations. Technology thus is an important determining factor for success of any national housing programme. So, the technical papers presented at the WHC2007 are expected to improve the housing programme in Malaysia.