

# Call for adopting green building concepts

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DOHA: Industries should shift from conventional buildings to green ones as green buildings significantly help in tackling environment problems in addition to long-term financial returns, according to an expert.

Explaining the benefits of green buildings, Mario Seneviratne, Director of Dubai-based Green Technologies claimed green buildings can reduce energy usage by 24 to 50 percent, carbon emission by 33 to 39 percent, water use by 40 percent and solid waste by 70 percent.

Seneviratne was speaking on the subject 'Market Transformation towards Sustainability' during the first day of Doha Green 2009 Conference yesterday at the Moevenpick Tower and Suites.

He expressed an optimistic outlook on the future of green building technology with the increasing awareness of countries. In fact the World Green Building Technology Council (WGBC) has increased six-fold to 55 member countries since its inception six years ago, and Qatar is making its way as one of the 9 on the list of prospective members which also includes Saudi Arabia among others.

Presently affecting 10, 000 companies, WGBC has among its goals advocate the important role of green buildings in mitigating global climate change, facilitate effective communication, share best practice, and promote collaboration between councils, countries, and industry leaders.

"Sustainability awareness is most crucial to the rate of adoption and market transformation," said Seneviratne, adding lack of it and the mistaken notion that green buildings cost more than conventional ones are major obstacles facing green building technology.

"It doesn't take complex processes and costly mechanisms to achieve green building," he said.

He pointed at government vision, developers' interest, and financial returns at operating stage as key motivations to green building in the region.

Among the green trends Seneviratne advocated in his presentation were carbon neutral communities, public transport and no-car cities, self-sustaining urban planning, on-site water treatment plants, and cultural sensitivity incorporating traditional design elements.

(The Gulf Peninsula)