

OLUTION



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 ❖ We have forgotten the planet
 ❖ A city's footprint goes beyond

was question whether living in a green building is more expensive. The answer is, the running costs of a green building are much less and so tenants prefer such buildings where they need to pay much less for water and energy use. The energy costs in a green building might be only 20 percent of a non-green traditional building of western style.

What is your opinion about the predominant low-rise constructions in Muscat?

I HAVE two hearts in my body – I think, to become a metropolis and to play an important role on the global scale, you need also a development, which not only keeps high the cultural heritage and the way of traditional buildings but also is attractive for multinational companies. You cannot suit a multinational headquarters in a smaller traditional environment. They need these communicative other structures. But the traditional benefits can be merged with the opportunities of modern technology. I don't like the skyscrapers whether in the US, Europe or Shanghai or in Dubai but they do have benefits, they give image and offer opportunities which traditional things don't offer. However, destroying skylines with skyscrapers will in the long run have an impact on attractiveness for tourism. People go to New York to see skyscrapers, so they don't lose tourists, but those who want to come to Oman will be affected if there is a change in the traditional building styles.

What do you see as the major conflict between modernization and green initiatives?

IT'S THE reluctance of the project developers to pay for later state of the art. Why is there no reason in new skyscrapers anywhere in the world to use double glazing instead of four times glazing for insulation layers of building walls. This has a tremendous impact on the loss of heat and you have to pay ten times more money for your cooling system if you have a bad insulation system. So there are many such discrepancies exist. We want to build cheap and fast and the bill will be paid later by those who live in them.

How applicable would green initiatives be in cities

that have already been built?

IT IS tough, but there are many measures to upgrade existing features, like water saving, energy saving devices, etc. The real solution, however, would be in building new buildings in a way that the new things fit to the demands of the future. In Europe, however, it was noticed that some of the old buildings have a better, greener energy consumption than those which were built hundred years later. So, one has to have the right mindset to change things. Technologically, everything is possible.

What do you think about the idea 'demolish and rebuild'?

IT WILL come. I think, in some of the buildings, which do not fit into today's demands, nobody will move in. And, therefore you will have to remove them. Some of the skyscrapers you see in the world will disappear in 20 years because nobody will be able to afford the energy and water costs in these buildings. So, in the long run, there will be lot of demolitions and rebuilding activity. Hopefully, not everything will be destroyed because buildings are also part of our history. And we have to preserve some of them for heritage value.

What is your ideal model of futuristic building?

I LOVE the diversity and the cultural differences in the world, therefore there is no one answer. I think, it has to be tailor-made differently in different conditions. The perfect green building in Vienna or Toronto will be completely different from the perfect building in the Middle East or in Asia. There are many influences, cultural, societal, population density. One has to balance all these economic, environmental and human issues.

How challenging would green initiatives be in the gulf, which is desert land?

IT IS one of the toughest climatic zones in the world and therefore it is not easy to create sustainable solutions under these severe climatic conditions. It is a much bigger challenge but there aren't many principle differences here than the rest of the world. Of course, the water issue is a different one but you have other

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