

# MPSJ signs biomass agreement

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**WASTE AS ENERGY:** Subang Jaya Municipal Council is working with Hioki City Hall, Japan, to make Serdang a sustainable biomass town

THE Subang Jaya Municipal Council (MPSJ) is working with Hioki City Hall, Kagoshima, Japan, to make Serdang a sustainable biomass town.

MPSJ president Datuk Asmawi Kasbi Asmawi and Hioki City Mayor Takamitsu Miyaji recently signed a memorandum of understanding on the cooperative effort.

Asmawi said the biomass town project, which was initiated by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) to produce renewable energy from waste, would benefit from Japanese know-how.

"The council has invested heavily to create a biomass town in Serdang. We hope UPM will pick an area under the council to set up its biochar facility to use charcoal to filter water from solid waste."

He said Japan had 300 biomass towns and hoped to double the number by 2020.

Asmawi said a local authority

in Japan which wanted to create a biomass town held more than 100,000 meetings to discuss the matter with the townsfolk.

"It's a systematic approach where the people commit to separating their waste while the local government recycles and reuses the waste," said Asmawi at the signing ceremony at the council's headquarters recently.

"The attitude of the Japanese is a definite plus point. They talk to their neighbours about the consequences of not disposing of their rubbish properly."

He was joined by a delegation of 30 council officers and Japanese diplomats, including Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia Shigeru Nakamura.

Asmawi said MPSJ officials would be visiting Hioki for three days to study its waste management and disposal system.

Miyaji said Japan was at the same crossroads as Malaysia 30

years ago, in terms of waste management.

"We faced similar problems as Malaysia does now. This was a time when many countries were looking into harvesting sustainable energy from waste," he said.

"We came to understand that the only way to tackle the problem was for the public to separate their waste while the local government's role was to create this awareness," he added.

Miyaji said Hioki, a 250sq km city with a population of 50,000, relied heavily on agriculture, forestry and fisheries which made direct use of its natural resources.

"We are hoping to learn from Malaysia, on how it utilises its natural resources.

"We want to look at your system of building plants to tap hydroelectric and wind energy sources so that we don't have to use nuclear plants."



Datuk Asmawi Kasbi Asmawi and Takamitsu Miyaji exchanging MoU documents. Pic by Amir Irsyad Omar