

 KUALA LUMPUR: The Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association (Fomca) has urged the Government to set up a special agency to oversee and approve all hillside developments.

Fomca president Datuk N. Marimuthu said all development on hillslopes and hillsides should in the meantime be temporarily suspended.

He said the agency should be tasked with developing mandatory standards and enforce them to ensure that no landslide occurred.

He was commenting on the announcement by Works Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Mohamed that there would not be a blanket ban on hillside development.

Marimuthu said the proposed agency should have at least one independent representative without any vested interest.

He said that whatever the Government's decision, no development should be allowed near water catchment areas.

There should in fact be a total permanent ban on development in such areas because it is too risky as it would jeopardise our already scarce water resources, he said.

Since all development approval rests with local authorities, he suggested that they should employ enough professionals to carry out scheduled inspections of hillside development in their respective areas.

As for areas which have already been developed, Marimuthu suggested that developers put in place an emergency response plan to warn residents of impending landslides.

◆ Bernama