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PRESS RELEASE

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Lifestyle

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TIPS FOR GREEN LIVING

Simple Steps to Shop Smarter and Save the Planet

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 11- Local actress and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Celebrity Partner Joanna Bessey has highlighted the five basic questions of sustainable consumption to help Malaysians reduce their negative impact on the environment.

The five questions are designed to guide new “green” shoppers in making the right purchase by assessing if a product is produced with minimal irreplaceable natural resources and produces small byproducts of toxic materials, waste, and pollution.

According to Bessey, some simple steps that consumers can start taking today include buying in bulk to reduce packaging, buying locally grown products, avoiding disposable paper, Styrofoam & plastic products and cutting back on meat consumption.

“Being a ‘green’ consumer means learning how to live within our ecological means,” said Joanna Bessey, speaking at the UNDP-Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment (MNRE) meeting on Climate Change Preparedness, themed, “Towards Policy Changes.”

“It entails making thoughtful and deliberate choices as consumers to reduce our harmful impact on the environment and practice sustainable consumption.

“Unsustainable consumption patterns have sparked overwhelming levels of environmental deterioration and are tearing great holes in the web of life.”

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Sustainable consumption is the use of goods & services that satisfies the demands of the modern consumer and is manufactured with minimal irreplaceable natural resources and produces small byproducts of toxic materials, waste, and pollution.

“Our consumption of food, for example, contributes to environmental degradation a variety of ways. The production, processing, transportation, and packaging of food can all contribute to environmental damage,” added Bessey.

Bessey also said that when consumer behaviors gets greener, product manufacturers will respond by making more of their products better for the environment.

“Shopping green doesn't have to take any extra time and effort. All it takes is a little environmental know-how,” she said.

Joanna Bessey is an outspoken advocate on environmental issues such as the conservation of tropical rainforests and biodiversity through her work with UNDP.

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR GREEN CONSUMERS

1. Is there an environmentally friendly alternative available?

Compare the price, quality and environmental credentials of different brands.

If the environmentally friendly alternative can do the job but cost a little extra, consider whether it's worth buying it for the sake of preserving the environment. A little research goes a long way!

2. Is the product's packaging wasteful or excessive?

Most packaging will be discarded once the product inside it is used up, so look for packaging that is made from recycled materials.

A better alternative is to choose products that come in refillable or reusable packaging.

Also, bringing a tote bag along when you shop is a great way to cut back on excess packaging.

3. Is the product made from recyclable materials?

Choose products made from recycled materials such as paper, cardboard, aluminum, steel and plastic. Check if the materials are biodegradable. Avoid hazardous materials.

4. Was the product produced locally?

Transporting products from around the world contributes to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Buying locally made products is a great way to reduce adverse environmental impacts while supporting the local economy.

5. Was the product created using environmentally sustainable methods?

Buy from manufacturers with a good environmental track record and check product labels for environmental certification such as ISO 14001. Most major supermarkets carry eco-friendly products that range from organic food to detergent.

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About UNDP

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners. Its current priority is to help all countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

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