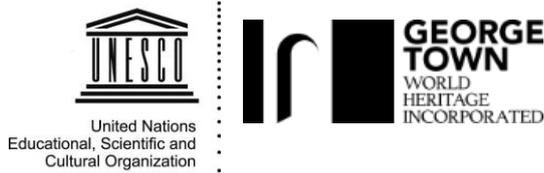


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DEVELOPMENT OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR) STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING THE PROTECTION OF GEORGE TOWN AGAINST DISASTERS

1 & 2 March 2018 – Bayview Hotel Georgetown Penang, Malaysia

PENANG, 1 MARCH 2018 – UNESCO Office Jakarta in cooperation with George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) and Think City have organised a two-day National Workshop to review the development of the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Strategy as part of the project entitled “*Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) of Heritage Cities in Southeast Asia (SEA) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific*”, financed by the Malaysian Funds-in-Trust.

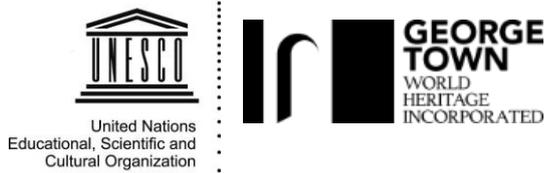
The National Workshop is the continuation of the Inception Workshop held in April 2017 in Penang, where one of its outcomes was to encourage each heritage city selected as the pilot site to formulate strategies for DRR within one year after the Inception Workshop. The DRR Strategy is intended to provide a guideline for the heritage managers as well as DRR agencies in minimizing disaster risks that could threaten the integrity of the heritage city. The heritage city of George Town is particularly prone to fire, earthquake and flood. The most recent flood incident happened in November 2017, inundating many streets in the capital city of George Town with murky brown water and forcing 2,000 people to evacuate. The DRR Strategy for George Town takes into account these major hazards, exposure and vulnerability analysis, potential implications to heritage and gap of the current disaster management, and use these as a basis to recommend ‘what’, ‘how’, and ‘who’ will take action when a disaster threatens/damages this historical area.

To ensure community participation in the development of such strategy and to ensure sustainability, a number of community workshops had been undertaken during the development of the strategy to receive feedback as well as recommendations.

This National Workshop in Penang aims to receive feedback as well as recommendations from the institutional level in order to supplement the information from the point of view of policy makers. Furthermore, the National Workshop also aims to harmonize institutional coordination and engagement in the process of disaster risk management in George Town. Through the workshop, it is hoped that the key actors and policy makers working on George Town preservation would be familiar with their roles in the process of disaster management either before, during or post-disaster.

Up to 50 participants are invited to the National Workshop – they include government officials, heritage managers, disaster management offices and academics. An expert on disaster mitigation on urban cultural heritage, Dr. Rohit Jigyasu of Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, will be the key resource person for this workshop.

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"On 4 November 2017, several locations in Penang had experienced severe flash floods," said Mr. Lim Guan Eng, the Chief Minister of Penang. *"With aid from the Penang State Government, commitment from local agencies and unconditional support from the community, Penang was able to recover at an incredible and admirable speed. On 6 November 2017, we were able to welcome Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales and his wife Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, for their maiden visit to George Town. The royal visit could proceed to tour the city as scheduled without any delay. Nonetheless, to safeguard our beloved Penang, we must constantly aim to improve the disaster management strategy in place. The State Government of Penang will continue to strive for a more comprehensive and effective disaster management plan with the cooperation of our 4Ps (Public-Private-People-Professional) partnership. This Disaster Risk Reduction workshop aptly reflects and complements our efforts."*

Shahbaz Khan, the Director of UNESCO Office Jakarta, is pleased that UNESCO is able to collaborate with the Penang State Government, George Town World Heritage Incorporated and Think City in formulating a disaster risk reduction strategy to improve the protection of George Town World Heritage Site against disasters. He remarked that the strategy is developed to complement the existing Heritage Management Plan of George Town and is expected to provide a guideline for the preparedness, first aid and recovery should a disaster strike the historic city.

Dr. Ang Ming Chee, General Manager of George Town World Heritage Incorporated said George Town World Heritage Incorporated will do its best to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction 2015-2030 by developing an effective Disaster Risk Reduction programme and integrate it into the overall heritage management of George Town. *"George Town World Heritage Incorporated is committed to work with the local communities and partner agencies to achieve this goal. It is only with collective action that the people's safety can be protected and the Outstanding Universal Values of George Town be safeguarded."*

Dr. Matt Benson, Programme Director of Think City said that "disaster risk reduction (DRR) has become an increasingly pertinent issue with the recent floods and fire incidents in George Town. Based on community input and Geographic Information System (GIS) data, Think City hopes to develop a DRR Strategy that can be suitably implemented in the local context."

-Ends-

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