

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE A PLATFORM TO ENHANCE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION STRATEGIES FOR URBAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

GEORGE TOWN: To commemorate the 10th anniversary of George Town and Melaka's joint inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, George Town World Heritage Incorporated has organised the International Conference on Managing Urban Cultural Heritage (MUCH) 2018 at Bayview Hotel Georgetown Penang from 1 to 4 October 2018. The conference is supported by the Penang state government, and held in collaboration with the Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO and the Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur.

The conference features 37 speakers and moderators from 15 countries, who will share their initiatives on the management of urban heritage, discuss heritage management approaches and innovative strategies, as well as engage in constructive discussions on the challenges and opportunities of urban cultural heritage management with over 100 registered participants.

George Town World Heritage Incorporated General Manager Dr Ang Ming Chee said the conference covered themes which are close to the heart of George Town. The themes include urban archaeology, globalisation and sustainable tourism, disaster risk reduction, cultural heritage education, conservation of objects and collections, documentations, rejuvenation of urban heritage, and online mobilisation in heritage management.

“We look forward to the onstage and offstage exchange of ideas, to reflect the growth and progress George Town has made in the past 10 years. We also see this international conference as a catalyst for international collaboration and networking. It is an occasion for us to intrigue one another with our initiatives in the management of urban heritage, as well as in the conservation, development and education of heritage cities across different nations.

“We will strengthen our collaborations with existing partners such as UNESCO Offices, the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP), the Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage of Ritsumeikan University (R-DMUCH), and Artlab Australia, and also expand collaboration with other site managers from the Asia Pacific region,” she said.

Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, with the board of directors of George Town World Heritage Incorporated, officially opened the conference on Monday, 1 October 2018.

Keynote speakers were Dr Rohit Jigyasu, UNESCO Chair Professor of the Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage of Ritsumeikan University, Japan, and Heritage Commissioner Datuk Dr Zainah Ibrahim.

The conference participants also explored the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site through site visits to Fort Cornwallis, clan jetties, the Street of Harmony and local markets.

For more information on the conference, visit <http://gtwhi.com.my/gt10/much/>.

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ABOUT GEORGE TOWN WORLD HERITAGE INCORPORATED

George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) was established by the Penang State Government in April 2010 as the site manager of the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site. GTWHI is tasked to manage, safeguard and promote the site's Outstanding Universal Values in cooperation with the federal, state and local governments, as well as local communities, organisations and associations.

GTWHI develops and incorporates multidisciplinary knowledge in policy-making, educational, promotional, capacity building and mobilisation activities. The GTWHI team encounters daily challenges in conserving over 4,000 heritage buildings within the site, adaptive reuse of spaces and the safeguarding of living heritage, including those outside the World Heritage Site. GTWHI also works on cultural heritage promotion in schools, youth participation through volunteer activities, disaster risk reduction, regeneration of residency within George Town, paper and object conservation, first aid for cultural heritage in emergencies, and organising training workshops, among others.

These tasks are conducted through some 50 programmes and projects annually, with sponsorship from the Penang State Government, and in collaboration with UNESCO and its Category 2 Centres. Together with heritage professionals and the local communities who live in, work in and visit George Town, GTWHI will continue innovating pragmatic and holistic strategies to ensure George Town's heritage is conserved and safeguarded for future generations.