

**OPENING REMARKS FOR
GEORGE TOWN UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE 10TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION AND GEORGE TOWN HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS 2018
BY
YANG AMAT BERHORMAT TUAN CHOW KON YEOW
CHIEF MINISTER OF PENANG
CHAIRMAN OF GEORGE TOWN WORLD HERITAGE INCORPORATED
SATURDAY, 7 JULY 2018 | 5:30PM
PENANG YOUTH CENTRE BASKETBALL COURT,
LEBUH ACHEH, GEORGE TOWN, PENANG**

(VIP SALUTATIONS)

Respectable Members of the Community
Members of the Press
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening, everyone. Thank you for being with us and welcome to the Opening Ceremony of the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site 10th Anniversary and George Town Heritage Celebrations 2018.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate George Town World Heritage Incorporated, the partners and the working team of 61 staff, 21 communities and 373 volunteers in organising today's Celebrations. Your hard work has yielded success, through the impressive overall set-up, an organised street festival, and the warm, overwhelming response from all the participants who are attending the event today.

In particular, I must thank our local communities for your support, the sharing of your knowledge and contribution of your time. Please allow me to read out loud these 21 communities:

1. Badan Warisan Masjid Melayu Lebuh Aceh Pulau Pinang
2. Malaysian Pakistani League Penang
3. Nattukottai Nagarathar Heritage Society
4. North Malaysia Malayali Samajam
5. Penang Hainan Association
6. Penang Siamese Association
7. Penang Teochew Association
8. Masjid Kapitan Keling Qaryah Committee and Indian Muslim Community Organisation Malaysia
9. Gujarati Samaj Penang
10. Kwangtung and Tengchow Association
11. Malaysian-Japanese Society
12. State Chinese (Penang) Association
13. Penang Hindu Association
14. Warisan Balik Pulau
15. Liga Muslim Pulau Pinang



16. Penang Eurasian Association
17. Penang Hakka Association
18. Sikh Naujawan Sabha Malaysia (Penang Branch)
19. Penang Hokkien Association
20. Malaysian-German Society
21. Telugu Association of Malaysia, Penang Branch

I can see many community representatives here with us now, and more of them are at their stations at the Street Festival which we will be visiting later on this evening. Thank you for making George Town great and rich in culture, for practising the culture inherited from the past, and being proud of your identity by sharing it with others and the next generation. You are all the living culture that have shaped our Outstanding Universal Values. Your continued commitment and participation have been essential towards the peaceful sustainability of George Town's multicultural diversity. Such strong participation has once more showed the potential and power of George Town as the region's best cultural and heritage hub.

To commemorate our shared achievement, we will be installing the 10th Anniversary Commemorative Plaque today as a symbol of our efforts and progress over the past decade.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the 7th of July, 2008, Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca were jointly inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, based on three outstanding universal values: 1) multicultural trading towns, 2) multicultural living heritage, and 3) unique architecture and townscape.

However, we knew very little on these values and were adapting with the management system. While it wasn't easy for us to receive the inscription, neither was it easy for us to manage the responsibility. Therefore, we wholeheartedly appreciate the status and have been working relentlessly over the weekends and overtime to care for our site, and to protect, manage and safeguard our cultural heritage.

For the past 10 years, the Penang State Government has risen above hiccups and challenges and explored sustainable, creative and innovative approaches in managing one of the most complex cultural heritage sites in the world.

We have been persistent in our cultural safeguarding efforts because our culture is unique; it shapes our identity. It tells us where we come from, who we are, and comforts us when we face challenges in life. We are proud to be from Penang, as we are able to live in a harmonious balance and mutual respect with one another despite our diversity and differences.

The annual George Town Heritage Celebrations on the 7th of July is testament to our ability to collectively celebrate our differences and appreciate our similarities, while commemorating the significant recognition from UNESCO in 2008. The Celebrations also serves as a capacity-building platform where the layman like you and me can learn more about our shared cultural heritage in an interactive and creative way.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have passed the first 10 years as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and we will have many more years ahead. George Town is exceptionally rich with history and culture through both tangible and intangible elements, and it is constantly evolving and adapting. To ensure it remains sustainable in the years to come, the Penang State Government through George Town World Heritage Incorporated will put in place visionary, feasible, and yet practical management strategies for our city.

Since 2008, we have allocated over RM36mil for cultural heritage related projects in George Town. The projects include the Oral History Documentation Project, Video Documentation Project, Cultural Heritage Education Programme, Tangible and Intangible Heritage Inventories, the restoration of the Protestant Cemetery, Heritage Habitat Seed Fund for the physical restoration of heritage premises and also the annual George Town Heritage Celebrations and George Town Festival and more.

We are now one of the best managed heritage sites in the world, and we will continue to do better. We will be integrating the goals of urban heritage conservation as well as social and economic development. With this, we can also better understand the complexity of heritage values to protect and preserve the built environment and cultural landscape, progressing towards sustainable development of the city.

Let's free ourselves and enjoy the Celebrations today. The streets of George Town are closed to traffic so the World Heritage Site is given back to all of us. So join me and our team to indulge in an unforgettable cultural heritage evening with dances, songs, food, programmes, community workshops, and performances. Let's celebrate as much as we have worked. With this, I hereby declare the launch of George Town Heritage Celebrations 2018, to mark the 10th anniversary of the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Thank you.