

**WELCOMING REMARKS FOR
NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON HARMONIZING COORDINATION TO IMPLEMENT
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR) STRATEGY IN THE HERITAGE CITY OF
GEORGE TOWN
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BAYVIEW HOTEL GEORGETOWN PENANG**

(VIP Salutations)

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to all of you, *Salam Bersih* and welcome to the National Workshop on Harmonizing Coordination to Implement Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Strategy in the Heritage City of George Town. Let me begin by congratulating UNESCO Office Jakarta, George Town World Heritage Incorporated and Think City for successfully organizing this significant event in George Town.

I would also like to welcome our guests from UNESCO Office Jakarta and the Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO to this National Workshop.

As the chairman of George Town World Heritage Incorporated and the Chief Minister of Penang, I am proud to announce that this year, our historic city of George Town is celebrating its 10th Anniversary as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I would like to congratulate all of us in George Town who have contributed to conserving and safeguarding the tangible and intangible cultural heritage in our city.

It is an honour for George Town to be selected as a pilot site for the “*Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) of Heritage Cities in Southeast Asia (SEA) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific*” project run by UNESCO Office Jakarta and UNESCO Apia Office in cooperation with George Town World Heritage Incorporated and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). This National Workshop is specifically addressed to the case of George Town and we are here today to discuss the development of effective Disaster Risk Reduction strategies for our heritage city.

On the 4th and 5th of November last year, several locations in Penang had experienced record rainfall and fierce winds, its ferocity shown by the Penang ferry being pushed inland. 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 the 6th of November, just a day after the flood, 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. We will continue to strive for a more comprehensive and effective disaster management plan through our 4P partnership involving the Public, Private, People and Professional sectors. In addition to a detailed study of the hazards Penang faces, a thorough analysis of the gaps in the current disaster management plan will also be conducted during the workshop.

This active involvement from our 4P partners have enabled Penang to bounce back from the worst rainstorm and natural disaster in history in a mere 10 days. A systematic approach would naturally encompass the urgent need for a reliable and credible weather forecasting mechanism. To this end, information must not be hoarded but shared freely and widely.

My gratitude to everyone here for taking the initiative to contribute your time and thoughts towards this issue. I wish you a constructive and successful workshop ahead.

Thank you.