

**OPENING SPEECH FOR  
LAUNCHING OF GEORGE TOWN UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE  
10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PROGRAMMES  
BY  
YAB TUAN LIM GUAN ENG  
CHIEF MINISTER OF PENANG  
CHAIRMAN OF GEORGE TOWN WORLD HERITAGE INCORPORATED**

**ON 15.01.2018 (MONDAY), 11.00 A.M  
GEORGE TOWN WORLD HERITAGE INCORPORATED**

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(VIP Salutations)

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to all of you, *Salam Bersih* and welcome to the launching ceremony of George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Programmes.

2018 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year since George Town's joint inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site together with Melaka. The unique architecture and townscape of George Town World Heritage Site epitomise the tangible component of physical buildings and structures while the harmonious co-existence of diverse cultures and beliefs symbolises the intangible counterpart of our heritage. While it has been a decade since the inscription, we should not ignore the existing cultural heritages that have persisted since the early days of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is therefore our responsibility to continue safeguarding them for the future generation through the 4Ps' (Public-Private-People-Professional) partnership. George Town World Heritage Incorporated, as the Penang State Heritage Agency, will continue to champion the efforts in preserving, protecting and promoting a UNESCO World Heritage Site that we can all be proud of.

The forthcoming 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site will showcase programmes and activities involving the public culminating in stories, conversations and collaborations of the past 10 years as well as the way forward for the next 10 years. We would like to invite everyone to contribute and join us to understand our past so that we can connect with the present to better face the challenges of the future together.

2018 is certain to be an exciting year for Penang. Penang Hill will be submitting its nomination to be listed as a biosphere reserve under the UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme. This tripartite collaboration is an example of our 4P partnership between the Penang State Government, The Habitat Foundation and Universiti Sains Malaysia, coupled with the strong backing from the local hill communities. The recently concluded "BioBlitz" saw 117 scientists and students from around the world, including Malaysia, joining forces to document the rich flora and fauna of the hill from the top of tree cover to bottom.

For George Town World Heritage Site, Penang State Government will be committing a total of RM3 million in seed funding towards the Heritage Habitat Seed Fund to assist the community to safeguard their continued habitation of their rented heritage premises in light of the high conservation costs. George Town World Heritage Incorporated has also been tasked to develop incentive programmes to support owners who provide affordable rent to long-term tenants. These efforts are imperative to ensure that the people who make the soul of this heritage site continue living there to support its growth and also sustain the age-old practices and traditions.

On top of that, another seed fund of RM1 million will be allocated to upgrade the public facilities in the precincts around our renowned Little India. The Penang Island City Council has committed to finance and build a welcome arch for the enclave. Penang Indian Chamber of Commerce also agreed to provide financial support to related projects to enrich the Little India's precinct as a centre to showcase the cultural diversity of Penang.

The 6 shophouses at Lebuhraya Kimberley are also expected to be completed by the end of this year to accommodate traditional craftsmen and local businesses from this year onwards. We wish to retain long-established practices and trades and make them relevant and competitive in the market, including integrating innovation and technology with heritage. Not only will this give the craftsmen a new lease of life, but also brings us closer to our aim to become the prominent hub of creativity in Malaysia.

Towards the north seafront of the island, the restoration project of Fort Cornwallis will also be completed within this year and hopefully before 7 July 2018 when we officially celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the inscription. By then, we will be able to see the unveiling of a 1-meter water-filled moat surrounding the walls of the fort which historically acted as a defence barrier, a common feature of English forts during the 1700s. The original moat was built in 1804 by the order of then Penang Governor Robert Townsend Farquhar but was eventually covered up in 1920s due to a malaria outbreak. We are delighted to bring back a part of its past into present so the future generation can

also appreciate its historical value. This project is also done in collaboration between the Penang State Government, Think City and the eminent Aga Khan Trust for Culture – another example of our effective 4Ps’ approach.

Speaking of potential for Penang this year, we are also very thrilled for the inauguration of flights connecting Penang and Doha via Qatar Airways three times a week from 6 February 2018 onwards. This will also provide countries from Middle East and Europe easier access into Penang, where they can finally savour our world-famous street food, another important intangible heritage value for Penang, amidst the historical backdrop of George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Let us celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a determination to make George Town as one of the premier UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the region.

Thank you.