

**OPENING SPEECH FOR  
VIDEO DOCUMENTATION PROJECT LAUNCHING CEREMONY:  
THE ARTISANS AND PRACTITIONERS OF GEORGE TOWN  
BY  
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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 the Video Documentation Project on The Artisans and Practitioners of George Town. Let me congratulate George Town World Heritage Incorporated, together with Image Farm and Majestic Theatre for successfully organising this public screening featuring 30 outstanding artisans and practitioners of the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We have with us this morning these irreplaceable living heritage of George Town. These ladies and gentlemen served the needs of our everyday life, through their lifelong dedication as watch repairers, electroplaters, optometrists, leather goods maker, rattan crafters, trishaw maker, joss stick makers, tailor, mahjong makers, shoemakers, songkok maker, goldsmiths, dhobis, Chinese physician and Al-Quran publisher.

I wish to thank these unsung heroes and heroines whose devotion to their trades and crafts have safeguarded the cultural heritage of George Town. Their selfless contributions have played a significant role in the success of George Town's inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008.

We are grateful that these artisans have agreed to be interviewed and share with the video project team their techniques, skills, and insider insights during the video documentation process. The videos that we will be watching today document the history, daily life, working methods and the working environment of the heritage traders. The videos provide a window for the public to visualise the life of a heritage trader and to understand the background to their craft.

This video documentation project launching ceremony is our stepping stone to invite more people to join us in appreciating the contributions of the unsung heroes and heroines of cultural heritage. We hope to raise awareness and urge more people to stop taking heritage

for granted, as knowledge from the past helps us to define who we are today, and where we want to go in the future.

The Penang State Government through George Town World Heritage Incorporated is committed to safeguard valuable craftsmanship and knowledge by recognising them as the living heritage of George Town. We walk the talk through our 4P (Public-private-people-professional) partnerships to initiate inclusive programs for all communities despite their race, cultural or political differences. For example, the Penang State Government has committed a total of RM3mil towards the Heritage Habitat Seed Fund to assist the community in the George Town World Heritage Site to safeguard their continued habitation of their rented heritage premises.

We also have in place the state-initiated pilot programme called the 'Artisan-in-Residence Programme' to safeguard the cultural heritage of the George Town World Heritage Site. It provides an opportunity to rebrand and innovate traditional products.

Also, through the recently launched Sia Boey Rejuvenation Project, the old Sia Boey Market will be renovated and made into a flexible space to be used to host temporary or seasonal markets, cultural and educational events.

These initiatives will provide the venue and platform for us to promote cultural heritage knowledge and products to more people. It is through these holistic approaches that we can successfully safeguard cultural heritage with impactful results.

With this, I end my speech by thanking everyone for attending today's event and let's work collectively in safeguarding our cultural heritage. I wish all of you a happy Sunday watching the video documentaries featuring the artisans and practitioners of George Town.

Thank you.