

PRESS STATEMENT*For immediate release***Penang breaks ground with the rejuvenation of the historic Esplanade Seawall**
GT CDC, Think City and Aga Khan Trust marked its launch o at the George Town World Heritage Site

GEORGE TOWN, PENANG, May 13, 2022: **George Town Conservation and Development Corporation (GT CDC)**, **Think City Sdn. Bhd.** and the **Aga Khan Trust for Culture** celebrate the completion of the new seawall and public promenade along the historic Esplanade. The Esplanade is the seaside promenade at the heart of George Town's UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was the first area to be cleared under Captain Francis Light, who first landed at the adjacent Fort Cornwallis. The initiative is part of the ongoing partnership with the Penang State Government and Penang Island City Council (MBPP) to rejuvenate the Penang historic area under the umbrella of (GT CDC).

Penang Chief Minister YAB Chow Kon Yeow commented, “We have seen the seawalls play such an important role in protecting the Esplanade and its heritage offerings whilst being a coastal defense for Penang. Therefore, we are proud to share the completion of the Esplanade Seawall by the State Government, who is actively upgrading and expanding the network of spaces and public facilities to increase the connectivity of social interaction throughout the focus areas in the state. This initiative entrusted to GT CDC since 2016 is based on the North Seafront Master Plan which aims to upgrade quality public spaces that are acceptable, attractive, and inclusive for all in the George Town Special Area Plan.” The project is a major public-private sector endeavour that envisions an upgraded seawall, an extended and much-improved public promenade in front of the Esplanade. This entire area was designated as a priority action area in the George Town Special Area Plan (SMP). The seawall stretches for about 570m from the Medan Renong Food Court on the west side to the Royal Malaysian Navy base at the eastern end of the Esplanade. Future plans foresee the expansion of the public promenade all the way to the entrance to Swettenham Pier along the East seafront.

Penang Local Government, Housing & Town & Country Planning, YB Jagdeep Sing Deo explained that the State Government has mobilized the relevant agencies to study in detail and in depth the need to upgrade the entire area of the Sea Wall, as soon as it detected the breakwaters that have been built since the 19th century in a dilapidated condition and no longer able to function properly around the year. 2017.

The wall and former promenade had reached a critical condition in 2017. Poorly repaired wall patches, missing masonry and extensive cavities were increasingly evident along the entire length of the seawall. The Penang Strait’s incessant waves had undermined toe protection and determined the collapse of parts of the structure.

“After exploring various options, we are delighted to share that a unique construction technique to match the materials and structural principles of the original construction was chosen in order to harmonise the character of the new structure in line with the requirements of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. While the new mass gravity wall emulates the original construction, it also takes advantage of state-of-the-art building material enhancements to ensure high performance and longevity for the new structure. In addition to that, the rejuvenation of the space offers Penangites and visitors a renewed experience of the heritage site,” he added.

The works that began in 2018 included a RM12.9 million construction works that was funded by the MBPP and Penang State Government, and RM1.5 million consulting and advisory services undertaken by Think City. AKTC provided technical expertise. Site works are managed by the GT CDC in

collaboration with MBPP. The implementation of the North Seafront Masterplan, which covers some 14 projects at a total cost of RM140 million, demonstrates the advantages of a culture-based approach towards the sustainable socio-economic development of George Town's valuable heritage and environmental assets. In addition, the project will expand considerably the availability of open space in the city and improve public amenities in the World Heritage Site's most significant public concourse area.

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Project Data:

Project Value: RM14.4mil

Contract Construction Value: RM12.9mil

Commencement Date: 27 August 2018

Completion Date: 30 April 2022

About Penang Island City Council (MBPP): The City Council of Penang Island is the city council that administers the city of George Town, which includes the entirety of Penang Island, Malaysia. The City Council of Penang Island is responsible for urban planning, heritage preservation, public health, sanitation, waste management, traffic management, environmental protection, building control, social and economic development, and general maintenance of urban infrastructure.

About the George Town Conservation and Development Corporation Sdn. Bhd. (GTCDC): GTCDC is a partnership between the Penang State Government's Chief Minister's Incorporated (CMI) and Think City Sdn Bhd with Aga Khan Trust for Culture as the technical advisor. It is a special purpose vehicle set up to improve the public realm following the approval of the George Town Special Area Plan in 2015. Among its key objectives are the regeneration, upgrading and activation of public spaces and selected heritage buildings in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

About Think City: Think City is an impact organisation established in 2009 to create more sustainable and equitable places for the benefit of all. Our knowledge, skills and strategies focus on urban solutions, the environment, social communities, and the cultural economy. Think City is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Berhad (the sovereign wealth fund of the Government of Malaysia). For more information, log on to www.thinkcity.com.my

About the Aga Khan Trust for Culture: AKTC is the cultural agency of the Aga Khan Development Network ("AKDN"). Through its Aga Khan Historic Cities Support Programme ("AKHCP"), it undertakes projects involving urban regeneration, conservation, and physical and social revitalisation of communities in historic cities and settlements in countries with a significant Muslim presence. Where appropriate, it operates in coordination with other AKDN agencies such as the Aga Khan Foundation ("AKF") to bring the required expertise to multi-sector, urban area development projects. www.akdn.org/aktc

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Appendices:



Seawall Upgrading: Under construction



Completed Seawall Upgrading & Promenade

Before:



After:

