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THINK CITY LAUNCHES FIRST EVER CLIMATE ACTION WEEK IN PENANG

PENANG, Nov 17 - Think City, a social purpose organisation focused on urban rejuvenation has launched a programme of events dedicated to the climate crisis with the Penang State Government and other partners. Targeted at the public at-large, the inaugural Climate Week is aimed at creating public awareness on climate change, to promote sustainable production and consumption, and to encourage discourse on climate actions and solutions.

Held over eight days, the programme includes an exhibition on the climate crisis, the first ever Climathon in Malaysia - a hackathon to find solutions in battling climate change effects, talks and workshops by climate and environment specialists (including one by English primatologist and anthropologist, Jane Goodall), a series of locally directed and produced short-film and documentary screenings followed by Q&A sessions with some of the directors and producers, a community river clean-up session, and a number of child-friendly climate-change related workshops.

The launch was officiated by YB Phee Boon Poh, Executive Councillor of Welfare, Caring Society and the Environment, Penang State Government.

Speaking at the launch, Phee said that Penang Climate Action Week marked not only a first for Penang, but a first for the country, and that he was encouraged that the state government was collaborating with organisations such as Think City and others in Malaysia who were passionate about taking action on the climate crisis.

“Rising temperatures, rising sea levels, extreme winds and flash floods; we here in Penang are experiencing all of the above,” he said.

However, the Penang state exco member was optimistic that action could be taken to mitigate the effects of climate change.

“On a national level, there can be regulation to make large-scale activities that affect our planet illegal. On a State level, we are looking at several plans to mitigate the disastrous effects of climate change.

“I’m happy to say that we are working with Think City on a nature-based Climate Adaptation Plan for Penang, to reduce the temperature, mitigate the effects of storms and flooding, and much more,” he added.



Phee also said that urban citizens could make changes on a personal, household, neighbourhood and even the community level.

“We all need to change the way we do things. This is what Penang Climate Action Week is all about -- us gathering together as a community, as a State, to discuss, share information, formulate strategies and take action.”

Matt Benson, Programme Director at Think City, who also spoke at the launch highlighted the connection between cities and the climate crisis.

“For centuries, cities have been centres of commerce, culture and innovation but today, evidence points to urbanisation and mass consumption as one of the largest causes of the climate crisis,” said Benson.

He stated that the Penang Climate Adaptation Plan, formulated by Think City, involved nature-based solutions.

“There are opportunities to create a better quality of life while lowering the carbon footprint through better planning and investment into nature-based solutions.

“Think City is developing a nature-based climate adaptation programme for the urban areas of Penang island, together with the Penang City Council, endorsed by MESTECC and supported by multiple partners.”

Benson cited the example of the city of Medellin, Colombia in justifying nature-based solutions.

“Why nature-based? It has proven to be the most effective, carbon-neutral way to combat climate change. When the city of Medellin in Colombia made the decision to create 30 green corridors along roads and waterways to reduce the heat island effect, the temperature was reduced by more than 2°C,” he said.

“We also want to ensure that we inform and empower urban citizens, as well as devise solutions together with climate professionals and city stakeholders. This is the reason behind Penang Climate Action Week - to raise awareness among Malaysians, so that individuals and collectives both can play a part.”

The Penang Climate Adaptation Plan will be presented as part of a Policy Discourse on November 19th.

Meanwhile, Malaysia’s first Climathon, 24-hour hackathon to find solutions to climate change, was conducted on November 16th where teams competed in creating and



presenting innovative solutions. The winning team was recognised at the launch in an award ceremony, and will stand a chance to compete at the global Climathon, organised by European organisation Climate-KIC, in Paris in 2020.

Penang Climate Action Week is part of Think City's year-long 10th Anniversary celebrations in alliance with the George Town Lit Fest.

Benson said, "The alliance with the renowned George Town Literary Festival has given us access to their loyal followers so that we may reach beyond the boundaries of urbanists and climate enthusiasts. Our hope is to extend this movement on Climate Action with an annual Climate Action Week every year."

Penang Climate Action Week is a joint effort created in partnership with (in no particular order) Penang Green Council, Penang State Government, Gamuda, Climate-KIC, The George Town Literary Festival, HP, Trash Hero, The Climate Reality Project, WWF, Roots & Shoots, The Habitat Foundation, Penang Science Cluster, AIMPACTZ, Kuala Lumpur Eco Film Festival (KLEFF), Ground Control and The Tropicalist.

For more detailed information see www.thinkcity.com.my/PCAW.

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About Think City

Think City is a social purpose organisation dedicated to improving the wellbeing of communities by creating more sustainable, liveable and resilient cities. Established in 2009 to spearhead urban regeneration in George Town, their impact and successes have led to expansion into Butterworth, Kuala Lumpur, and Johor Bahru. Adopting a community-first, evidence-based approach, Think City focuses on four main communities of practice: Placemaking, Resilience, Analytics and Conservation. Owing to their position as a neutral party, Think City has enabled synergies between the public and private sectors, the community and international partners. Together, they work to implement projects that enhance the heritage, art & culture, environment, economy and resilience of cities in the Asean region. Think City is celebrating their 10th Anniversary with a year-long programme of events and projects. For more, see thinkcity.com.my.

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