



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

# THINK CITY CONNECTS PAST CULTURE WITH FUTURE INNOVATION AT THE 10TH WORLD URBAN FORUM, ABU DHABI

ABU DHABI, Feb 9, 2020 – Malaysian urban rejuvenation organisation, Think City, celebrates 10 years of work in the urban sphere with a presence and programme of launches, workshops and talks at the 10th session of UN-Habitat's World Urban Forum (WUF10) in Abu Dhabi, which held its official opening ceremony today.

In line with the global conference's theme - '**Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation**' - the organisation represents their work in conservation with an interactive booth that replicates a heritage shophouse, iconic in Malaysian towns and cities. Meanwhile, the interior features a multimedia installation outlining the company's four main areas of urban innovation: Placemaking, Resilience, Analytics and Conservation.

Reduced in scale due to space constraints, the booth is inspired by an existing house in Lebu Melayu, Penang. Of the Southern Chinese Eclectic Style typology, the shophouse was built prior to 1890. The owner received a grant for restoration and conservation works under the George Town Grants Programme, managed by Think City.

Think City Managing Director, Hamdan Abdul Majeed said that it was important to recognise the role of culture in the context of rapid urban development, and the significant financial contribution a **cultural economy** can bring.

"Cities the world over are beginning to realise the importance of the cultural economy, with governments increasingly investing in creative districts such as in Abu Dhabi, Kowloon in Hong Kong, Singapore and Montreal in Canada.

"Developing cultural links with the past encourages creative innovation and provides character and social identity to cities of the future. This is why we chose to represent ourselves at WUF10 with a culturally strong booth exterior, showcasing future innovation in the interior. It is also strongly connected to our work in developing creative and cultural districts in Malaysia," he said.

Hamdan added that the Think City team at WUF10 would be assisting the Malaysian delegation at the forum, particularly with a proposal for the redevelopment of Penang Bay, to be pitched to global investors.

“The development of Penang Bay, inclusive of the George Town and Butterworth waterfronts, will be a game changer with the potential to propel Penang towards becoming a high-income state.

“George Town can enhance existing assets to develop a hub combining culture, the creative industries and innovation. Butterworth, on the other hand, has the potential to become a highly-skilled regional innovation hub, servicing industries of the future,” he said.

Hamdan also highlighted that it was a crucial time for city stakeholders to take swift action in the sustainability of people and the planet.

“The World Urban Forum, organised by one of our institutional partners, UN-Habitat, is an important gathering of governments and experts in the urban industries and it is crucial as part of our nation-building agenda to participate in the many dialogues that will take place. It is also an opportunity to introduce our experience and expertise to a global audience, and return with knowledge that can enhance our initiatives, which in turn will benefit the cities that we work in,” he said.

Highlights of Think City’s planned programme at WUF10 include:

- the launch of the Think City Institute;
- a training event, ‘Placemaking for Safer Cities: Translating Data into Design’, led by Think City and Safetipin;
- and a pitching session where the Penang State Government and Think City will propose the Penang Bay project to international funders at the Cities Investment Platform.

WUF10, which launched officially today at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) expects over 18,000 participants from 168 countries, over 450 speakers, with 133 sessions.

For further information see [www.thinkcity.com.my/WUF10](http://www.thinkcity.com.my/WUF10)

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### About Think City

Think City is a social purpose organisation dedicated to making cities people-friendly and resilient by being a catalyst for change in the way cities are planned, curated, developed and celebrated. As a regional citymaking agency, Think City provides urban policy thinking, management and implementation of urban solutions in Southeast Asia and beyond.

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 arts, heritage, 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](http://thinkcity.com.my).

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