

Think City Hosts UN-Habitat as part of Global Observance of World Cities Day and Launch of World Cities Report 2020

GEORGE TOWN, PENANG, Nov 3, 2020 –Think City hosted the Executive Director of Un-Habitat, Dato’ Seri Maimunah Sharif in a live broadcast on October 31, 2020 as part of the Global Observance of World Cities Day and the launch of UN-Habitat’s ‘World Cities Report 2020: The Value of Sustainable Urbanization.’

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Global Observance was a virtual event with an official Opening Ceremony featuring a keynote address by the President of the Republic of Kenya and statements by the Governor of Nakuru County, the Mayors of Ekaterinburg and Shanghai, UN Secretary-General António Guterres and UN-Habitat Executive Director, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, among others.

The key theme that emerged from the statements was the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on our rapidly urbanising world, but also that cities hold the key to economic recovery with opportunities for innovation that have and can take place as cities adjust to developing circumstances and ‘build back better’ with more sustainable and equitable actions.

In a video message, YAB Tuan Chow Kon Yeow, Chief Minister of Penang welcomed Dato’ Seri Maimunah, back to the city of George Town and applauded the World Cities Report 2020.

“This report will be a seminal international reference on cities today and in the coming years to guide us not just through the fallout of COVID-19, but through the many urgent challenges faced by the world today,” he said. “Here in Penang, we look forward to continuing our collaboration with UN-Habitat on ways to broaden our measures of prosperity and refining our actions towards a more sustainable future. Many of these ideals are embedded into our Penang 2030 vision which we hope not only inspires the nation, but similar-sized states around the globe,” he added.

The ceremony, which included the launch of the World Cities Report 2020 was followed by two parallel sessions consisting of four roundtables on the topics of :

1. *Achieving SDGs through resilient intermediate cities,*
2. *Working together to build resilient communities and cities*
3. *Building back better communities through public space and*
4. *World Cities Report 2020-The Value of Sustainable Urbanization.*

Think City also sponsored the publication of a **special edition** of the **World Cities Report 2020** for distribution in Malaysia.

Hamdan Abdul Majeed, Managing Director, Think City said, "Think City is honoured to sponsor a special edition of UN-Habitat's World Cities Report 2020 for distribution in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, urbanisation has brought many benefits, but we still grapple with transitioning from industrial to knowledge-based industries, climate change, pollution, urban sprawl and inequality. The issues we face are similar to those in other dynamic and rapidly-growing regions and it is important that we have sound and practical reference material to guide us."

"For the past two years, Think City has collaborated with UN-Habitat. In addition to providing chapter reviews for the World Cities Report 2020, we have been collaborating on a nature-based solutions programme for climate change in Penang together with the Penang State; applying the Cities' Prosperity Initiative to Asian cities; exploring regional housing issues; and looking at innovative ways to finance the Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda. We look forward to the continuation of our fruitful partnership," he said.

Some of the key ideas from the World Cities Report 2020 include:

1. The world will further urbanise over the next decade, from 56.2 per cent of the global population today to 60.4 per cent by 2030
2. Recovering urban economies is essential for lifting countries out of the global recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to achieve the SDGs
3. The value of urbanisation lies in being inclusive of all groups that live in cities
4. The economic growth and consumption potential of cities must support sustainable development and build resilience to climate change
5. The environmental value of sustainable urbanisation cannot be realised without prioritising the needs of the most disadvantaged

For further information or to download the report visit: <https://unhabitat.org/wcr/>

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About World Cities Day

World Cities Day has been observed annually across the globe on October 31 since its inception in 2014, highlighting a range of issues around sustainable urbanisation. It is hosted by a different city each year, with attendance ranging from communities to the highest level of dignitaries. This year, UN-Habitat partnered with the Government of the Republic of Kenya to organise the event, with global celebrations hosted by the County Government of Nakuru, supported by the Uasin-Gishu and Kisumu County Governments. The Observance was guided by the general theme 'Better City, Better Life', with the sub-theme 'Valuing our Communities and Cities'.

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. For more, see thinkcity.com.my.

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