



# SEBERANG PERAI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

## **WELCOMING SPEECH**

YBHG. DATO' Sr HAJI ROZALI BIN HAJI MOHAMUD  
**PRESIDENT**  
**SEBERANG PERAI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

## **EVENT**

OPENING CEREMONY  
THE SECOND (2<sup>ND</sup>) SEBERANG PERAI  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECOTOURISM  
AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS

## **OFFICIATE BY**

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MR CHOW KON YEOW  
**CHIEF MINISTER OF PENANG**

## **DATE / TIME / VENUE**

**8 OCTOBER 2018 (MONDAY)**  
**8.30 AM**

**THE LIGHT HOTEL**  
**SEBERANG JAYA**

**Thank you Mr. / Ms. Chairperson**

**The Right Honourable Mr Chow Kon Yeow**

Chief Minister of Penang

**Honourable Dato' Ir. Haji Ahmad Zakiyuddin Bin Abdul Rahman**

Deputy Chief Minister of Penang (I)

**Honourable Prof. Dr Ramasamy s/o Palanisamy**

Deputy Chief Minister of Penang (II)

**Honourable Mr. Muhammad Bakhtiar Bin Wan Chik**

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Arts And Culture of Malaysia

**Honourable Members of Penang State Executive Council (EXCO)**

**Her Excellency Dato' Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif**

Executive Director of United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
(UN-Habitat)

**Honourable Members of Penang State Legislative Assembly (ADUN)**

**Honourable Members of Parliament**

**Honourable Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi**

Secretary General of UCLG ASPAC

**Honourable Dr. Brad Pettitt**

Mayor of The City of Fremantle

**Councillors of Seberang Perai Municipal Council**

**Head of Departments and Officers**

Seberang Perai Municipal Council

**Distinguished Speakers, Guests and Participants**

**Members of the Media**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

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*Bismillahirrahmannirrahim*

*Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,*

A very good morning and a very warm welcome to everyone present here.

Alhamdulillah, let us extend our sincere gratitude to Allah S.W.T for giving us the opportunity to be here today at the official opening of the **Second Seberang Perai International Conference on Ecotourism and Conservation Efforts 2018**. It gives me a great pleasure to speak to you this morning and to welcome you most cordially, "**SELAMAT DATANG**", I wish you a wonderful time in Seberang Perai and Penang.

We are delighted and honoured to host this conference today and wish to extend a warm welcome to the notable keynote speakers, Honourable Mr. Muhammad Bakhtiar bin Wan Chik, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Arts And Culture of Malaysia; Her Excellency Dato' Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif, the Executive Director of UN Habitat who was a former President of Seberang Perai Municipal Council and also a former Mayor of City Council of Penang; and Honourable Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, the Secretary General of UCLG ASPAC; as well as the expert speakers and participants from various countries, namely Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and Kenya. It is always a great pleasure to welcome important guests from overseas and Malaysia. I realise

that you are fully dedicated to the sessions that will follow but I do hope you will also take time to enjoy fascinating Malaysia, especially Penang with its tropical settings, friendly people and multi-cultural cuisines.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Seberang Perai has undergone much urbanization and industrialization over the last decades. However, even with rapid growth in urbanization and industrialization, agriculture still remains the dominant land use in Seberang Perai, with over 40% of its land used for agriculture.

Seberang Perai Municipal Council recognizes the importance of conservation and preservation of its natural settings and biodiversity. We would like to introduce active conservation so that Local Economic Development (LED) will flourish and local people will get benefit. It is in our interest to see wetlands properly managed and appreciated all over the world. We want to bridge gaps and create synergy between environmental conservation, economy, development, technology and culture.

Our commitment was reflected in the Five-Year Seberang Perai Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 which was launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018. The Strategic Plan outlined 85 programmes and 202 activities that must be executed to transform Seberang Perai into Low Carbon City and Smart City

by 2022. We want to ensure all resources are fully utilised towards achieving Seberang Perai Sustainable Smart City. Immediate target is to increase recycling rate from 42% in 2017 to 70% in five years, in 2022. We also planned to reduce 50% solid waste generated per capita from 1.6kg/capita/day to 0.8kg/capita/day by year 2022.

We aimed to plant at least 50,000 trees before 2022. The current stocks are 250,205 trees planted throughout Seberang Perai. We have planned many programmes to achieve this target such as annual tree planting programme to commemorate Malaysia's Independence Day; World Water Day on 22 March 2018, World Rivers Days that was celebrated on 22 September 2018 at Taman Bandar beside Sungai Perai, World Environment Day in June 2018 and 1 Baby 1 Tree Programme initiated on 7 October 2018. These are all yearly programmes and I am delighted that we were not only met the target but exceeded in every programme that was carried out. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Penang State Government, all stakeholders, orange warriors (nickname given to our frontline workers), and strategic partners that participated and gave full support in the implementation of our programmes.

We aimed to create and develop as many pocket parks as possible which will benefit the Seberang Perai communities and the environment for years to come. Since July 2018, four (4) pocket parks namely, Upcycle

Park, Tecoma Park, Wedding Park and Community Park were created and developed with strong and huge participation from local residents, NGOs and private sectors. This is the result of MPSP's *7Ps Inclusive Partnership Model* [*People, Public, Private, Philanthropy, Philosopher and Planet Partnerships*], which works collaboratively across organization and communities to improve outcome, value for money and services as well as minimize impacts on our natural environment.

Yes, we are setting a very high target, but if we do not aim high, we may not achieve our vision to be a Low-Carbon and Smart City by year 2022. We must be ambitious and work hard to achieve Penang's vision 2030 that is a "*family-focused, green and smart state*", which was launched by the Right Honourable Mr. Chow Kon Yeow, Chief Minister of Penang on 29 August 2018.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Seberang Perai has been identified as a potential eco-tourism site with a focus on mudflats and mangrove swamps where a large number of migratory birds are found. Eco-tourism can be one of the major drivers of the state's tourism industry as Seberang Perai has the highest potential to become an eco-tourism site in this region.

Main potential sites for eco-tourism are mudflats and mangrove swamps at Kuala Bekah in Penaga and the Teluk Air Tawar and Kuala Muda coast, as well as the freshwater swamp at Air Hitam Dalam Recreational Forest, Sungai Dua with a size of approximately 11 hectares. These sites attract thousands of migratory waterbirds from hundreds of different species each year. The Teluk Air Tawar-Kuala Muda site is also an important area where many rare species of waterbirds have been spotted. The migratory birds have the potential to attract birdwatchers from all over the world, especially from Korea and Japan. If this site is promoted as an eco-tourism spot, it will attract nature lovers from all over the world and turn Seberang Perai into a main eco-tourism hub in the region.

In a pilot rapid assessment of selected ecosystem services provided by the Teluk Air Tawar-Kuala Muda Coast IBA in Pulau Pinang presented by the Malaysian Nature Society and Birdlife International in 2016, the 8km stretch of mangroves and mudflats along the coast of Teluk Air Tawar-Kuala Muda is an important bird and biodiversity area (IBA) are proposed to be gazetted as a protected area to conserve the largest remaining intact coastal mangrove forest block in Seberang Perai. The researchers added that gazetting the site will also safeguard the livelihoods of the fishing communities and associated economic activities as the mangroves are an important part of the ecosystem for fish breeding and spawning ground.



## **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Seberang Perai is giving strong emphasis on the development of ecotourism. Previous declaration which was made in the first conference has become a guideline and an ever green principle to further develop ecotourism industry in Seberang Perai. I would like to repeat the declaration that was concensusly agreed in the First SPICEC in 2016 that is to:-

- i. further develop the ecotourism and environmental conservation efforts in Seberang Perai;
- ii. improve the infrastructure to encourage ecotourism and at the same time, preserve the natural environment of Seberang Perai through the participation of the local community and not to be influenced by merely market demand;
- iii. educate and create awareness amongst local community to work together on environmental conservation for ecotourism, to create business opportunities and develop local economy;

- iv. continue efforts to conserve nature in Seberang Perai by mainstreaming the ecotourism industry without altering the originality or eco-sensitivity of particular area; and
- v. protect the Teluk Air Tawar – Kuala Muda coastal area as mangrove forest reserve and efforts to be made to list the area as RAMSAR site, subsequently will stimulate conservation effort and boost avi – tourism in Seberang Perai, which will empower the local communities economically.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

In order to promote ecotourism in this region, a biannual Seberang Perai International Conference on Ecotourism and Conservation (SPICEC) has been initiated in 2016. I would like take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Her Excellency Dato' Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif for being farsighted in initiating and spearheading the first SPICEC 2016. I am extremely thankful to Honourable Mr. Satees a/l Muniandy and Councillor Mr. David Marshel a/l Pakianathan for initiating this idea. I do appreciate and would like to thank Dr. Tiun Ling Ta, Councillor Mr. Wong Chee Keet and Head of Departments headed by Puan Siti Haslinda Binti Hasan for your hard work and commitment in ensuring this event runs smoothly.

Today Seberang Perai Municipal Council proudly organises the 2nd Seberang Perai International Conference on Ecotourism and Conservation Effort (SPICEC 2018) with the theme “**Promoting Local Economic Development (LED) through Ecotourism**”. While SPICEC 2016 Resolution focused on conservation and awareness, this year SPICEC will look at the economic impact of ecotourism to the local people.

This conference will not only benefit the big industry players but also to take care of the local traders. This conference also will be an avenue for the academia and NGO to share their knowledge and best practices on how to promote ecotourism and local economic development without limiting the nature conservation.

The objectives of this conference are to:-

- i. Provide a platform for discussion and sharing of knowledge and best practices with regards to ecotourism and LED;
- ii. Establish networking and collaboration for the international community in the area of ecotourism;
- iii. Promote ecotourism products

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Local Economic Development (LED) is about creating decent jobs and economic opportunities for everyone. Local governments can generate growth and employment from the bottom up through local economic development strategies that harness the unique resources and opportunities in our territories. Local governments are best placed to work with communities to assess the benefits and costs of tourism in our areas and to develop strategic plans to ensure activity in this sector is sustainable. Local economic Development (LED) will help all the SMEs that are interested to become more manpower-lean, to develop a stronger city, and build a better quality.

Before I conclude, once again I would like to congratulate the organiser in making this conference a success. Their efforts, is very commendable and should be continued in future. Syabas! To all participants, thank you for committing your time and energy towards this conference. I wish all of you the best and a fruitful discussion.

***Wabillahi Taufik Wal Hidayah, Wassalamualaikum***

***Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.***

**Thank you.**