



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

10 December 2020

Message on the launching of CAP's upgraded virtual platform

Coinciding with the 72nd Anniversary of the World Human Rights Day and in conjunction with Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) 50th Anniversary, we are refreshing our digital platforms to improve and enhance our reach to all segments of society. Since its formation 50 years ago, CAP's mission has been to contribute to the emergence of a just, responsible and caring society. To this end, we have been pivotal in the movement for environment sustainability, food and products safety, consumer rights advocacy and consumer education. These has been done via publications, conferences and seminars, with grassroots communities, policy makers as well regional and international organisations.

CAP's role in renewing and growing its virtual presence was based on the need to effectively communicate and engage consumers on various current issues urgently needed at a time when we are facing multiple crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, socio-economic and ecological crises. All these crises are product of human activities, unguided by wisdom and ethics, and driven by greed and arrogance. Our entry into the digital world, while we are aware of its dangers and abuses, is to communicate, engage and instil noble values in a generation that will decide the direction the world takes. If we are not there, others with their selfish agendas and destructive policies will influence them.

A tiny virus, not visible to our eyes, has created havoc in our lives, children cannot go to school, workers are unemployed, business are facing bankruptcy, international trade is disrupted, places of worship are closed, and our social life is severely restricted. Suicides, mental illnesses and crime are on the rise, domestic violence is increasing and marriages are breaking down. The full socio-economic impacts of the pandemic will probably be known in a few year's time. While millions are suffering a few wealthy individuals have profited from this tragedy and added billions of dollars to their wealth.

The pandemic has aggravated global and national poverty and inequality. Even before the pandemic, the 2019 United Nations State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report, estimated that 820 million people (1 in 9 people) do not have enough to eat, up from 811 million in 2018. The situation must be much worse now with business closures and increased unemployment. The report highlights that over 2 billion people, mostly in low- and middle-income countries, do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. A profound transformation of food systems to provide sustainably-produced healthy diets for a growing world population is needed.

A recent UN-backed report warns that the rapid decline of the natural world poses a serious threat to life on this planet. It states that the biosphere, upon which humanity as a whole depends, is being altered to an unparalleled degree across all spatial scales. Biodiversity - the diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems is declining faster than at any time in human history. Deforestation, the over-exploitation of seas and soils, and the pollution of air and water are together driving the living world to the brink.

The report calls for transformative changes to achieve our global social goals related to food, water, energy, health and other essentials. Since current structures often inhibit sustainable development and actually represent the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, fundamental, structural change is called for. Transformative change can expect opposition from those with interests vested in the status quo, but such opposition can be overcome for the broader public good.

The Covid-19 pandemic should force us to take stock of where we have gone wrong and implement the needed structural changes. The governments and policy makers are not moving fast enough to bring changes in the economic and social policies that would promote the public good instead of private profit. A radical change is needed in the way we perceive and relate to nature, produce and consume goods and services. We should not regard nature's resources as something to be exploited to satisfy our greed and hyper-consumption. We must learn to respect, value and live with it in harmony.

The present economic system rooted in unlimited growth, private capital accumulation, profit maximization and concentration of economic power in large corporations is the root cause of the multiple crises. We need an ecologically sustainable and socially just development model to replace the current one that causes ecological destruction, and produces poverty and gross inequality for the many and vulgar opulence for a tiny minority.

CAP will continue its work for empowerment of the people so that their voices and demands will be heard in the corridors of power and not ignored. We call upon the government and private sectors to work hand-in-hand to ensure families go through this pandemic with minimal effects. Consumers are also encouraged to be prudent in their expenditure, reduce wastage and stay safe.

CAP's 50 years would not have been successful without the support of the media for the voices of the people to be heard and their interests protected. Together we need the support of Malaysians to build a kind, caring and responsible society we want.

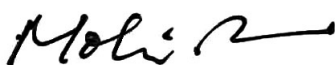
Following are the links to explore and learn about the many consumer and environmental issues that we are raising. Please remember to bookmark and follow us on these platforms if you find that the issues raised are helpful and useful to you as a consumer.

WEBSITE : <https://consumer.org.my/>

FACEBOOK : <https://www.facebook.com/ConsumerAssociationPenang>

INSTAGRAM : https://www.instagram.com/consumer_penang/

TWITTER : https://twitter.com/consumer_penang



MOHIDEEN ABDUL KADER
Presiden
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