



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

Websites:
www.consumer.org.my

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109
email: consumerofpenang@gmail.com

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Speech by President of Consumers Association of Penang, Mr. S.M. Mohamed Idris at launching of CAP book “Moving Towards Zero Waste: Community Actions in Penang”

First of all the Consumers' Association of Penang would like to thank the President of Majlis Perbandaran Seberang Perai (MPSP), Dato' Sr Haji Rozali bin Haji Mohamud, for the cooperation rendered to jointly launch CAP's book titled “Moving Towards Zero Waste: Community Actions in Penang”.

This book amplifies community-led solutions to the waste problem. Many of the Zero Waste actions and champions highlighted in this book are initiatives taken in Seberang Perai since many years ago. We are happy that the schools, community-based organizations, residents associations and individuals portrayed in this book are here to join us in this occasion.

The road to zero waste is more than diverting waste from landfills or incinerators. Our mission is to prevent waste from being generated in the first place by changing consumption culture.

Consumers thirst for more, not only what they need but what they want or desire. This is further fueled by producers and advertisers who seek profit from consumers behaviour. Our current consumption habits, production, transportation, packaging are fueling a global environmental crisis.

Consumers have become disconnected from where products come from, the raw materials needed, the processes involved, the waste generated. We are literally destroying the planet, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

However, it is heartening to know that many individuals, organizations and municipalities have stepped up to take actions. We need to be mindful consumers and at the same time demand that manufacturers and retailers become more conscious, ethical and change for the better. If we continue business as usual, we will move closer to collapse of civilization.

The small actions that you are undertaking, by composting organic waste, reducing consumption, refusing plastics, growing your own food, reviving traditional practices, saving water, reducing energy and encouraging others to do the same is a step towards a better future.

We are part of a global community seeking to advance solutions. CAP would like to thank the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives whom we have been a part of and work closely with for the past 18 years since its inception in 2000 for supporting us in this project.

From the concerted actions that we take, we can create a ripple effect throughout the entire system. In Penang, the local authorities and the State has been proactive by banning free distribution of plastic

bags in certain outlets, banning polystyrene food containers, and enforcing mandatory separation at-source of solid waste.

Now, we should move on to more actions such as imposing a blanket ban on single-use plastic items including straws, disposable utensil, cutlery, shopping bags, water bottles, and microplastics. It is not impossible as many other municipalities, States and countries have announced these bans and have started phasing out these items.

MPSP, MBPP and the Penang state government should once again take the lead to reduce plastic pollution and waste generation on the whole. Composting of organic waste and reduction of food waste must also be prioritised and intensified.

CAP, and am sure the people of Penang will extend our support as this will ensure better quality of life and environment.

S. M. Mohamed Idris
President
Consumers Association of Penang

Speech delivered by Mr Mohideen Abdul Kader, Vice President of CAP