



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Speech

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Green Action Week

Welcome to the Green Action Week activities organized by the Consumers' Association of Penang. The Green Action Week celebrated from 30th September to 6th October 2019 is a global campaign to promote sustainable consumption. Each year in October, organisations around the world take joint action to promote a common cause. This year, 50 civil society organisations in 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia, and the Americas participate in the campaign.

The theme of Green Action Week since last year has been "Sharing Community". Why is it important for us to revive the traditional culture of sharing and collaborative communities? It's because mindless consumption, over consumption, individualism, materialism and throw away culture are stressing our planet and subsequently our lives in the planet. Thus it is crucial for us to tackle both the social and environmental causes of this crisis. One way is through sharing, which increases people's access to goods and services without further stressing the planetary boundaries.

The activities lined up today aims to inculcate values of sharing by introducing various platforms for communities to share, including sharing of knowledge, resources, books, traditional remedies and seeds. This will not be a one-off event but the sharing platforms that are created will be managed by CAP to ensure sustainability. Last year's seed sharing event in conjunction with Green Action Week has been successful in creating a platform whereby there has been an exchange of seeds and gardening tips till now.

Ultimately we aim to popularise the concept of sharing communities that will lead to mindful consumption, sustainable lifestyles and building sustainable, zero waste communities. In this regard we also need the government to support this effort by

- > Not joining the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants of 1991 (UPOV 1991) which will restrict farmers from freely saving, exchanging and selling farm-saved seeds. Instead the government must encourage saving and sharing of seeds including heirloom and indigenous varieties of plants to promote agro-biodiversity.
- > Introducing tax on plastic production, manufacture, sale, use and disposal as an initial step towards phasing out the production, use and disposal of single-use plastics. We need to move away from the throw-away culture towards sharing and zero waste communities.
- > Provide adequate financial resources for start-up costs to promote urban farming.
- > Increase incentives to encourage local farmers, entrepreneurs, communities to generate more organic and sustainable farming produce and products for consumers to have healthier and affordable food.

While many people consume on very high levels, and many more strive to join that lifestyle, there are people who lack access to even basic goods and services. Thus let's revive the culture of sharing to help the deprived and marginalised too.

A Sharing Community is A Caring Community!

Note to Editor: Green Action Week is an initiative by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and is carried out in coordination with Consumers International (CI) of which CAP is a member.

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