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For Environmental Justice

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Media Statement

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COASTAL FISHERMEN BECOME VICTIMS OF RECLAMATION PROJECTS IN PENANG

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) is concerned of continuing threats to the livelihoods of more than 4,000 coastal fishers in Penang due to ongoing and proposed reclamation projects in the State.

Although objections have been made in the past by affected coastal fishers and NGOs including SAM and the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) but there has yet to be assurance from the Penang government that the reclamation projects would not threaten the environment and the livelihood of fishermen in the state.

The latest incident that affected a coastal fisherman in Batu Uban here proves that the responsible parties did not pay due attention to defending the fate and livelihood of fishermen, now and in the future.

Many complaints and grievances were received by SAM from affected fishermen regarding the decline of their catches and subsequently decline in their income arising from reclamation projects that have been implemented in several areas of the state.

Marine water pollution and ever decreasing fishing zones due to reclamation at the coastal areas have caused dwindling fisheries resources and thus catches, at times deteriorating to 70% of their daily income.

Sedimentation from the reclamation projects not only pollutes the waters in the coastal zone but the reclamation also damages fishers nets. Among areas affected by reclamation projects in Penang Island are Tanjung Tokong, Sungai Gelugor, Jelutong, Batu Uban, Persiaran Gurney and Queensbay.

Worse threats may occur to the coastal and marine environment and livelihood of the fisher communities in the State if the State Government proceeds with the massive Penang South Reclamation (PSR) at the southern coastline of Penang Island which involves creation of three man-made islands covering 4,500 acres.

The Environmental Impact Assessment of the PSR states that in 2015, a total of 2,757 licensed fishermen operated within the impact zone of the project. The wholesale value of fish landed at the area was estimated at RM42.09 million, which amounted to 12.4% of the total wholesale value of fish landings from Penang Island.

Taking into consideration the adverse impacts of reclamation to the coastal and marine ecosystem, and subsequently the fisheries sector, SAM urges the Penang government to immediately cancel the decision to implement reclamation projects in the State.

STOP RECLAMATION! SAVE OUR SEAS! SECURE COASTAL FISHERS LIVELIHOODS!

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