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Press Statement

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Need For Urgent Preventive Measures To Avert Tragedies In Kuala Lumpur

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) is alarmed to learn about yet another sinkhole appearing in the Jalan Masjid India area in Kuala Lumpur today. It is indeed worrying over the state of public safety in the area, including in other parts of Kuala Lumpur, which are not only vulnerable to sinkholes and land subsidence, but also to flash floods, landslides and slope failures arising from the current season of frequent and intense rains.

Quite clearly, much more comprehensive action is needed and for preventive measures to be taken to safeguard public safety, not only in the Jalan Masjid India area but in all areas of high risk in the city to prevent future mishaps.

While we grapple with the sinkhole or land subsidence problem, SAM is also very concerned about the likelihood of flash floods happening, similar to the disaster that took place at the LRT Station in Masjid Jamek in 2020, which led to massive losses and damage, including in other parts of the city.

In the case of the sinkhole tragedy, we echo the call by other groups for the City Hall to release the map of the city's underground and make public the mitigation and safety measures that are being undertaken to prevent more tragedies from happening.

We also share the calls for measures to enhance public safety in public areas by:

- Putting in place an Inter-Agency Committee coordinated by the Mayor of City Hall to oversee, monitor and inspect high risk areas.
- Inform the public about what measures are being taken to mitigate the impacts of disasters.
- Putting in place improved signage and barriers in places which are high risk so that the public is on the alert and is warned sufficiently.
- Undertake enhanced emergency response measures especially in high risk areas, including in educating the public.
- Maintain increased transparency and communication for all residents and the public in high risk areas regarding safety measures and incident responses.

In the medium and long-term, there is certainly need for proper adaptation plans by the City Hall in response to climate change impacts and extreme weather events, that include enhancing infrastructure resilience, reduce risks and vulnerabilities to flood, improve soil stability and put in place other ecosystem based approaches that act as sponges and minimise the overflow of waters into drains and rivers.

SAM reiterates the call for more comprehensive measures to be taken which will help prevent and mitigate future disasters.

Meenakshi Raman
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