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CONCEPT NOTE

ASEAN Sustainable Urban Forum (ASUF) 2025 - Side Event 6

Resilient Heritage: Safeguarding ASEAN's UNESCO Sites for a Sustainable Future

Host/Organiser:



UTM
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

MJIIT
Disaster Preparedness
& Prevention Centre
(DPPC)

**Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Center (DPPC),
Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIIT),
University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)**

Date & Time: 13 August 2025, Wednesday | 4:30PM – 6:00PM

Venue: Lounge 4, Hall 4, Kuala Lumpur Convention Center (KLCC)

Background and Rationale

ASEAN's exposed capital stocks amount USD8.35 trillion, three times its combined economy, characterized by 2000 disaster events in the last two decade. This event explores regionally led and internationally supported case specific strategies implemented to enhance disaster risk reduction (DRR) action for UNESCO World Heritage Sites in ASEAN, as a result of climate change, rapid urbanization and anthropogenic activities. Bringing together policymakers, regional experts, and DRR specialists, the session highlights best practices, innovative technologies, and regional cooperation frameworks to safeguard these irreplaceable world treasures, and urban resilience. Discussions will focus on integrating DRR and equitable resilience into risk-informed heritage planning, strengthening community resilience, and leveraging regional partnerships under ASEAN's disaster response mechanisms. The multi-sectoral platform aims to foster peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, actionable solutions and multi-scale DRR investment to ensure the long-term protection of World Heritage Sites and promoting safe tourism in the face of escalating transboundary risks, propagating across borders and sectors.



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Objectives

This side event aims to:

1. Promote Risk-Informed Planning for Heritage Protection

To explore and promote the integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and equitable resilience into the planning and management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in ASEAN, particularly in the face of climate change, rapid urbanization, and human-induced threats.

2. Strengthen Regional and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

To highlight successful case-specific strategies, best practices, and innovative technologies that strengthen regional cooperation, peer-to-peer learning, and ASEAN-led disaster response mechanisms for safeguarding cultural heritage and building urban resilience.

3. Enable Scalable, Inclusive Solutions and Investment for DRR and Safe Tourism

To foster multi-sectoral dialogue and identify actionable solutions and multi-scale investment opportunities for disaster risk reduction, ensuring the long-term protection of heritage assets and the promotion of resilient, safe, and sustainable tourism across the region.

Expected Output

1. Actionable Recommendations

Key policy and practice recommendations on integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) into heritage site management and sustainable urban planning across ASEAN.

2. Knowledge Exchange and Best Practices

Documentation of successful case studies, local innovations, and community-driven strategies for building resilience in UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

3. Strengthened Regional Collaboration

Enhanced multi-stakeholder dialogue and commitment to cross-border cooperation for heritage protection and disaster resilience under ASEAN frameworks.



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Target Participants

1. Policymakers and Government Officials

- National and local authorities from ASEAN member states Representatives from ministries of culture, urban development, tourism, environment, and disaster management

2. Urban and Heritage Planners

- Professionals involved in urban regeneration, heritage conservation, and climate adaptation
- City managers and local councils managing historic urban areas

3. Academia and Research Institutions

- Scholars and researchers focusing on disaster risk reduction, cultural heritage, and sustainable urbanisation

4. International and Regional Organisations

- Representatives from UNESCO, ASEAN bodies, and development agencies supporting DRR and heritage protection

5. Civil Society and Community Organisations

- NGOs and grassroots groups engaged in community-based disaster preparedness and heritage advocacy

6. Private Sector and Tourism Stakeholders

- Businesses and consultants in cultural tourism, sustainable development, and heritage site operations

7. Youth, Students, and Young Professionals

- Emerging leaders and youth advocates interested in climate resilience, heritage, and urban sustainability

Format and Structure

The side event will commence with introductory remarks by the moderator, setting the stage for the session's objectives and regional context. This will be followed by a short presentation highlighting the current and emerging risks faced by World Heritage Sites in the ASEAN region due to climate change, environmental degradation, and anthropogenic pressures. Subsequently, a moderated panel discussion will feature case studies from select ASEAN countries—such as Indonesia and Malaysia where targeted disaster risk management (DRM) strategies have been successfully integrated into heritage site planning, preservation and risk-informed development. Each panellist and commentator will present their respective experiences, emphasizing cross-sector collaboration, the role of vulnerable communities (e.g. children, women, people with disability, elderly, displaced people, refugee, etc.) and the adaptation of innovative technologies.

Agenda:

Time	Activity	Moderator
16:30 - 16:35 (5 min)	Welcoming Speech	Dr Khamarrul
16:35 - 16:40 (5 min)	Introduction Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explanation of the interactive format Setting expectations for the session and intended outcomes 	Dr Wan Nurul
16:40 – 16:45 (5 min)	Prof. Dr. Mikio Ishiwatari Co-Chair, Asian Civil Engineering Coordinating Council (ACECC) TC-21, Japan	Dr Khamarrul
16:45 – 16:55 (10 min)	YB Ir. Ts. Zahir Hassan All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia, Disaster Risk Management (APPGM-DRM) Guiding Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can policymakers better support disaster risk reduction efforts to protect heritage sites and local communities in Malaysia and across ASEAN? What role can parliamentarians play in strengthening regional cooperation and ensuring sustained investment in building resilience for UNESCO World Heritage Sites? 	Dr Khamarrul
16:55 – 17:05 (10 min)	Ms. Faduma Ali Associate Program Specialist, Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, UNESCO Paris, France	Dr Wan Nurul
17:05 – 17:15 (10 min)	Ms. Ng Boon Nee Manager, George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) Guiding Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some effective strategies for enhancing disaster resilience in historic urban areas while preserving their cultural and architectural integrity? How can local communities be meaningfully engaged in safeguarding heritage sites against increasing climate and disaster risks? 	Dr Wan Nurul



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17:15 – 17:20 (5 min)	Prof. Dr. Saini Yang Executive Director, Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Beijing, China	Dr Khamarrul
17:20 – 17:30 (10 min)	Dr. Nugroho Christanto Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Yogyakarta, Indonesia Guiding Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on Yogyakarta's experience, how can academic research inform practical strategies for protecting heritage sites in disaster-prone areas? What lessons can be drawn from local initiatives in heritage cities that successfully integrate disaster risk reduction and community resilience? 	Dr Khamarrul
17:30 – 17:35 (5 min)	Mr. Aslam Perwaiz Executive Director, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Thailand	Dr Wan Nurul
17:35 – 17:40 (5 min)	Mr. Sufyan Aslam Disaster Risk Reduction Specialist, UNICEF Malaysia	Dr Wan Nurul
17:40 – 17:55 (15 min)	Q&A Open Session	Dr Wan Nurul
17:55 – 18:00 (5 min)	Wrap-up & Summary by Moderator	Dr Khamarrul