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**PRESS STATEMENT BY PENANG HILL CORPORATION (PHC)
GENERAL MANAGER, DATO' CHEOK LAY LENG, ON 19 MARCH
2024, IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESS RELEASE BY SAHABAT ALAM
MALAYSIA (SAM) ON PENANG HILL CABLE CAR'S
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)**

With reference to the press release dated 17 March 2024 by Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) entitled "Wrong to Approve EIA for Penang Hill Cable Car Without Public Participation", **Penang Hill Corporation (PHC)** would like to state the following:-

Penang Hill Corporation (PHC) stands resolute in addressing and clarifying the points raised in SAM's press statement regarding the EIA approval for the Penang Hill Cable Car project.

In the spirit of transparency, PHC together with its project team and concessionaire, organised multiple tailored focus group discussions as part of the project's Social Impact Assessment (SIA) requirement to engage and educate the stakeholders, including NGOs about the Penang Hill Cable Car. The project via its SIA, obtained a broad majority consensus from participating stakeholders. Regrettably, SAM had failed to turn up at the focus group discussion.

PHC would like to stress that the implementation of this project has been carried out in accordance to the law and has received approval from the relevant authorities, fulfilling all compliance requirements. This can be evidenced by the thousands of man-hours dedicated to designs and numerous rounds of reviews by certified and specialised engineers, architects, and consultants, including international cable car experts from Doppelmayr Group, ensuring the compliance with legal and international safety standards. PHC takes this commitment very seriously and will adhere strictly to it.

This includes appointing independent experts and checkers to carry out the Social Impact Assessment (SIA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA), and Geotechnical Assessment reports, further underscoring PHC's unwavering intent to maintain transparency and objectivity in all regards of the project.

The technical studies on cable car alignment and tower locations were also conducted by Doppelmayr engineers, who collaborated with local engineers on-site. Notably, the team from Austria has a proven track record, having installed cable cars in multiple UNESCO sites, adding valuable expertise to the project. These studies were extensively reviewed before obtaining approvals from the authorities.

An expert team of arborists and the Penang Forestry Department were involved in meticulously identifying every tree earmarked for removal. Their findings, along with detailed assessments, have been submitted to both the Penang Island City Council (MBPP) and the Department of Environment. This ensures transparency and compliance with environmental regulations.

The Penang Hill Cable Car project has been classified under First Schedule (NOT Second Schedule) of the Environmental Quality (Prescribed Activities) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Order 2015 under the category of development in slope area with land clearing less than 50% of an area with slope greater than or equal to 25 degrees but less than 35 degrees. In such instances, it mandates that the EIA report does not need to be displayed publicly for comment.

The EIA report is available at the Department of Environment's library.

PHC also wishes to reaffirm that the cable car is not a mass rapid transportation as it is not designed to carry mass numbers of people. It does not, under any circumstance, constitute traditional public transportation which typically carries a higher volume of passengers at one go. The capacity of the cable car is 1,000 passengers per hour per direction (PPHPD). These figures are by far less than the PPHPD numbers served by other electric modes of public transportations, including monorails, MRT's and LRT's.

The Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve is not the first UNESCO biosphere reserve to implement cable cars. Cable car technology has been around for decades and has been globally recognised as a green mode of transportation. It has been successfully implemented at numerous UNESCO sites worldwide, including World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks.

The Penang Hill Cable Car project is one of the most anticipated projects in Penang, and is expected to contribute significantly to the tourism sector in the state, bringing discernible socio-economic benefits to the local residents. PHC continually strives to balance economic growth with environmental protection, aiming for a sustainable Penang Hill in line with its status as a UNESCO biosphere reserve. PHC continues to welcome stakeholder engagement to engender a better understanding of this project.

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About Penang Hill Corporation

Penang Hill Corporation was established in 2009 through an enactment passed by the Penang State Legislative Assembly. Its main focus is to manage the funicular system, undertake the development of socio-economy and infrastructure in Penang Hill and promote the Hill as a major ecotourism destination, in its vision to make Penang Hill the Hill Resort of Choice in Malaysia and the region.

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