

Home > Global issues > Global justice movement > Martin Khor – Penang boy, global champion of sustainability

Global issues Global justice movement

Martin Khor – Penang boy, global champion of sustainability

3 Apr 2020

436 7



Martin's passing is a huge loss for Penang and indeed the world. A St Xavier's Institution alumnus, he studied at Cambridge University, played a leading role in Third World Network and rose to become a profound thinker, intellectual and champion of the global South.

I met him several times while attending forums and talks after his return to Penang in 2015, following a long stint at the South Centre in Geneva. I was struck by his simplicity and humility despite being such a prominent figure globally. And he never failed to give an encouraging word.

You wouldn't guess he was a member of the UN secretary-general's taskforce on environment and human settlements and vice-chair of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights. The man had no airs.

If you had read any of his columns in the Star, you could not have failed to be impressed by his ability to dissect complex global agreements and expose how the big powers were trying to tilt them to their advantage in behind-the-scenes the negotiations. The art, which he mastered, was to present it in a way that ordinary people could understand.

Once back in Penang, he gave his full support to Penang Forum.

Check out the video tribute to Martin by Andrew Ng Yew Han (at the top) and Penang Forum's tribute to him below.

Penang Forum is deeply saddened and distressed by the loss of Martin Khor.

We grieve with his family especially his partner and Penang Forum committee member Meenakshi Raman.

[READ MORE: Three major challenges for the new Malaysia in the coming year](#)

Martin's passing has been marked by an outpouring of tributes to the man, nationally and internationally from Geneva to India – for his intellect, his dedication, his principles and his strength.

Many have expounded on Martin's unshakeable beliefs and his ability to work through the intricacies of international policies and smart-talking politicians, to separate the wheat from the chaff and to offer clear-sight lines for our understanding. He championed many deserving causes especially on climate change and spoke out for those who did not have the ability to do so themselves.

In the last few years while he fought his illness, Martin still chose to give his full support and share his skills with Penang Forum. He shared planning meetings, analysed proposals and wrote strongly worded press articles about Penang's mega projects and the environmental and economic pitfalls they present. He also used his highly placed contacts at federal level to review these projects.

Martin and Meena have been at the core of Penang Forum's attempts to bring about a more sustainable future for Penang. We are truly grateful, and we will miss him terribly.

Penang Forum steering committee

3 April 2020

[Go here for more tributes](#) – by Aliran, Third World Network, Consumers Association of Penang and the chair of the St Xavier's Institution board of governors.

Please help to [support this blog](#) if you can.

Read the [commenting guidelines](#) for this blog.

TAGS activism sustainable development



LATEST FROM ALIRAN

Prioritise investigation into rape, release women from custody

#MakanKongsi sasarkan tambahan kutipan RM100,000 (Malay/English)

Penanaman buluh: Jangan eksploitasi baki hutan di Malaysia (Malay/English)

Be transparent over recovered 1MDB assets worth RM1.3bn

Coronavirus: Pandemic opens window of opportunity for local housing industry

SUPPORT THIS BLOG

This is a reader-supported public interest news site. Contributions to defray the cost of running this site are welcome. [Read more.](#)

By bank transfer/cheque deposit:

Anil Noel Netto
Public Bank Berhad account no: 4-5437119-34
(Swift Code: PBBEMYKL) Malaysia

Or [by credit card.](#)