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Eminent activist Martin Khor Kok Peng passes away — CAP

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APRIL 1 — Malaysia has lost one of its best activist who was also an intellectual of international standing who had worked tirelessly for the downtrodden and the disadvantaged South.

Martin Khor was the honorary secretary of the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP), advisor to the Third World Network, council member of Sahabat Alam Malaysia and former executive director of South Centre (a group representing the interests of the 53 developing countries based in Geneva).

He passed away this morning in Penang, of cancer and leaves behind a wife and daughter.

He was best remembered for his many contributions to the poor communities in Malaysia including Kuala Juru, Thean Teik Estate, and the fight against Asian Rare Earth and the stopping of the Penang Hill project.

Martin was an intellectual who communicated in a simple manner to reach out to people. He worked tirelessly for a just and equitable world economic order. He also gave up his job as a civil servant in the Ministry of Finance, Singapore.

Martin was instrumental to the development of CAP together with the late SM Mohamed Idris, creating one of the most vibrant consumer groups which had become a model for consumer associations in developing countries. He had mentored countless activists around the world who had the opportunity to work with him.

The global community in the South remembers him for his work on representing and articulating the views of the South in relation to unfair trade in the World Trade Organisation. He was also in the forefront globally in the climate change negotiations, representing the views of the South. Antibiotic resistance, access to medicine and the rational use of drugs were the latest issues he was working on.

Martin Khor is an economist trained at Cambridge University and the University Sains Malaysia. He is the author of many books and articles on economics, sustainable development, globalisation, trade and intellectual property.

He was formerly a member of the UN Committee on Development Policy, the UN Secretary General's Task Force on Environment and Development and a Vice Chair of the Expert Group on the Right to Development of the UN Human Rights Commission.

It is with tremendous heartfelt sadness and loss that we at CAP, consumers in Malaysia and in the global South who will miss his leadership and activism in fighting for their rights.

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