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KUALA LUMPUR is not ready to go green as many businesses in the city centre are still using polystyrene takeaway boxes and cups, said Bukit Bintang Central Environmental Committee (BBCEC) chairman Simon Leong.

But that is not the only reason. "Even after 16 years and 32 *gotong-royong* in the area, the level of awareness is still not there.

"People continue to throw rubbish into drains and on the street. There's still a lot of work to be done to clean up Bukit Bintang. We are not ready," Leong said, adding that political will and a mindset change were required to fully go green.

"As I see it, we are far from achieving this," he said.

At a *gotong-royong* on Saturday, Leong, who is also Federal Hotels International senior general manager, said the amount of plastic waste fished from the drains and picked up in the alleys proved that city folk were still backward.

"The Government announced that Kuala Lumpur will be polystyrene-free starting Jan 1 next year. But from the clean-up today, our volunteers said there was a lot of it in the rubbish everywhere," he said.

*StarMetro* had previously reported that starting Jan 1, 2017, polystyrene would be banned in the Federal Territories.

Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, who made the announcement in June, had said only biodegradable products could be used in Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan next year.

The ruling was introduced in Pasar Raja Bot in Chow Kit in July and was to be extended to include night markets, restaurants, food trucks, shopping malls, hypermarkets and hawker centres over the next few months.

The exercise was to be carried out in four phases to encourage residents and traders to stop using plastic foam products until the Federal Territories Biodegradable Product Usage By-Law is enacted.

Restaurant owners, petty traders, roadside stalls and even manufacturers of plastic foam will no longer be allowed to use and make these products any longer.

Leong, however, conceded that compared to a few years ago, the awareness level of the Bukit Bintang community on cleanliness had increased, but reiterated that more still had to be done.

Following the launch of the 32nd Bukit Bintang Central Gotong-

# Bukit Bintang yet to embrace green efforts

Committee: People still using polystyrene products, littering streets



Leong (left) and Dr Leong (right) kicking off the 32nd Bukit Bintang Central Gotong-Royong 2016 on Saturday.

Royong 2016, themed "Jom Bersih Bukit Bintang 11" 3RS, in the Plaza Low Yat boulevard area on Saturday, *StarMetro* followed some 800 volunteers who were armed with brooms and rakes as they took to the streets and alleys to clean up the city's main shopping district.

Volunteers found drains to be clogged with foam cups and boxes, papers were strewn everywhere, straws and plastic bottles were stuffed into mail boxes and cigarette butts littered the kerbs.

Some of the alleys behind areas such as Changkat Bukit Bintang, Tengkat Tong Shin and Jalan Alor were filthy and even had illegal cable extensions in the drains.

"There were polystyrene cups and boxes everywhere and the plastic rubbish and bottles were thrown on the streets. A peek into some of the rubbish bins placed outside the restaurants showed that rubbish was not being separated at source," Capitol Hotel front office manager Thomas Anthony said.

Thomas, who was a volunteer at the clean-up, said it was his third year taking part in the *gotong-roy-*

*ong* and there had been some improvement.

"The support from hotels and shopping malls in the surrounding area is good, but we are not seeing participation from the traders in Jalan Alor and Changkat Bukit Bintang," he said.

The twice-yearly clean-up organised by Federal Hotel International is part of activities under the Local Agenda 21 initiative.

The event was launched by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) acting project management executive director Dr Leong Siew Mun.

Among those involved were employees from Yayasan Muamalat Belia, Malaysian Association of Environmental and Health, Plaza Low Yat, Sungai Wang Plaza, Melia Hotel, Metro Hotel, Ansa Hotel, Royale Bintang Hotel, Federal Hotels International, The Federal Kuala Lumpur and Hotel Capitol Kuala Lumpur.

Also present were representatives from DBKL, Indah Water Konsortium Sdn Bhd, Alam Flora Sdn Bhd and the KL Fire and Rescue Department.



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