

"The ban also applies to the licensing condition for coffeeshops," Tong added.

He revealed the association was helping to foster love for the environment.

"We're printing a few thousand 'say no to plastic straw' banners to be given free to about 300 members and non-members. There are between 700 and 800 coffeeshops in Sibul."

Taman Selera Harmoni Sibul Muslim Traders Association chairman Abdul Taib Rosli said they had no problem in complying with the ban.

"In fact, in this food court, several stalls have already done away with single-use plastic straws. We fully support SMC's initiative.

"In my opinion, SMC could perhaps intensify awareness not only among the operators but also the patrons," he suggested.

There are eight stalls selling food, 17 selling drinks and five selling various merchandise at Taman Selera Harmoni.

Shunning plastic straws

The Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change has reportedly launched a programme called 'Roadmap Towards Zero Single-Use Plastic 2018-2030'.

The vision is to take a phased, evidence-based and holistic approach, involving all stakeholders, in addressing single-use plastics pollution in Malaysia.

While the Malaysian government is taking concrete steps to phase out single-use plastic, the latest Ipsos Malaysia study revealed only 44% of Malaysians are aware of Malaysia's 'Roadmap Towards Zero Single-Use Plastic'.

Ipsos Malaysia conducted a nationwide study in three waves from October 2018 to June 2019.

Among the key points are 56% of Malaysians are concerned about the issue of single-use plastic while 70% feel it's the government's responsibility to find ways to reduce plastic usage.

Ting cautioned that there would be no more excuse for coffeeshop operators to provide plastic straws from Jan 1, 2020 as the council has been carrying out awareness programmes since April.

"I'm positive SMC will be able to control the use of plastic straws because it is in the licensing conditions," she said. - *The Borneo Post*