

# HKO jointly hosts forum with universities on tackling weather and environmental hazards with smart use of big data (with photos)

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) jointly hosted a forum with the University of Exeter (UoE), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and others today (April 15) to explore how the smart use of big data can help tackle weather and environmental hazards.

Entitled "Global Conversation Hong Kong: Can big data save lives? Protecting Hong Kong against air pollution and extreme weather", the forum introduced to the participants how scientists make more accurate assessments of climate change and predictions of extreme weather events through revealing and analysing climate data in order to reduce the risks associated with a range of environmental threats and protect lives in the regions affected by climate changes. Over 100 participants, including representatives from different government departments, public utilities and private entities, as well as local and overseas academics, joined the forum. The Director of the HKO, Mr Shun Chi-ming, delivered welcoming remarks and joined a panel discussion at the forum.

"To study the impact of extreme weather on Hong Kong, the HKO has been collecting diverse types of climate data through various means, from the use of remote-sensing instruments and numerical weather prediction models to the increasingly popular crowdsourcing as a result of the rapid development of social media, and also the microclimate stations which enable the collection of data at street level. The data collected can improve the monitoring and forecasting of severe weather in the long run," Mr Shun said.

The forum also introduced a series of research projects conducted by the CUHK-UoE Joint Centre for Environmental Sustainability and Resilience on climate change and extreme weather to illustrate how the smart use of big data can provide sustainable solutions to emerging environmental threats including climate change, air and water quality problems, and biodiversity loss.

The academics who joined the forum today are the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of UoE, Professor Steve Smith; the Chair of Data Science and Statistics of UoE, Professor Gavin Shaddick; Co-Director of the Institute of Environment, Energy and Sustainability of CUHK Professor Gabriel Lau; and the Chief Development Strategist of the Division of Environment and Sustainability of HKUST, Professor Christine Loh.

The forum today was one of the events under the "Global Conversation" series initiated by UoE and was the first event the HKO had jointly organised

under the series with UoE. "Global Conversation" is an event series for world academics to explore topics of global importance through organising different forums.

