

Opening session of Eco Asia Conference held online (with photo)

The 15th Eco Expo Asia is taking place online this year, and the opening session of its Eco Asia Conference was held today (November 19) with ecology and environmental protection authorities from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao discussing their latest environmental policies.

Officiating at today's opening session, the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, said, "This year's thematic topic of the Expo is 'Green Innovation for a Circular Economy'. Amidst the pandemic, the demand for green recovery and the need for green innovation and a green economy to speed up the transitions for deep decarbonisation have become even stronger."

He added, "China has recently made a carbon reduction pledge to strive for the carbon emissions peak before 2030 and endeavour to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. This highly encouraging pledge has added a significant impetus to the global climate actions as well as Hong Kong's long-term decarbonisation strategy. In Hong Kong, carbon emissions peaked in 2014, and per capita carbon emissions were reduced from 6.2 tonnes in 2014 to 5.4 tonnes in 2018. According to the target set out in Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2030+, per capita carbon emissions will be reduced to 3.3 to 3.8 tonnes by 2030. To achieve deep decarbonisation, we need the concerted efforts from all sectors, including energy, built environment, transportation and waste management, and must adopt a multi-pronged approach."

To effectively reduce carbon emissions, the Government has been launching various initiatives that could also help improve air quality. These measures include introducing the Feed-in Tariff Scheme, planning larger-scale floating solar panels on water bodies, setting a new Green Energy Target to enhance the Government's energy performance by 6 per cent within five years, wider application of retro-commissioning for existing buildings for quick and cost-effective energy efficiency improvement, subsidising the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging-enabling infrastructure in car parks of eligible existing private residential buildings, subsidising the transport operators to try out green and innovative transport technologies, and issuing Hong Kong's first ever road map on EV popularisation next year.

On waste reduction, the Environmental Protection Department launched the "Reduce and Recycle 2.0" Campaign to support waste and carbon reduction in the community with innovative initiatives. The department is also in the process of implementing revamped policies on the collection of paper, plastic and food recyclables one after another and strives to support green innovations for a circular economy.

"I hope co-operation in green innovation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area will be strengthened in the future, so that we can work together to speed up the transitions for deep decarbonisation and

support the country's efforts in combating climate change, while improving regional air quality, reducing waste and moving towards a circular economy," Mr Wong said.

After the launch of the Eco Asia Conference today, the panel discussions will continue tomorrow (November 20) and next Monday (November 23). Other officiating guests at the online opening session included the Deputy Director-General of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Mrs Zhang Jieqing, who delivered an opening speech on the Mainland of China's latest green policies. The Director-General of the Department of Ecology and Environment of Guangdong Province, Mr Lu Xiulu, and the Director of the Environmental Protection Bureau of Macao, Mr Tam Vai-man, spoke on the topic of "The Latest Progress of Environmental Protection Work in the Greater Bay Area". As for the panel discussions that followed the opening session, panellists from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao shared their views on the environmental protection industry in the Greater Bay Area and the latest developments of government environmental protection projects.

Organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) and co-organised by the Environment Bureau, this year's Eco Expo Asia is consolidated with other fairs into HKTDC Autumn Sourcing Week | ONLINE. The Expo is being held from November 16 to 27 to continue to provide a platform for the industry and stakeholders to explore collaboration and business opportunities.

