

**Professor Simon S. M. Ho**

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**Welcome Speech at the Forum on Sustainable Development  
in Higher Education  
Jointly organized by HSMC and UNESCO-APEID**

21 July 2015 Auditorium, 2/F, Lee Quo Wei Academic Building, HSMC

Dear Professor Wang Libing, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning and a very warm welcome to the Forum on Sustainable Development in Higher Education, jointly organized by HSMC and UNESCO-APEID.

Sustainability or sustainable development (SD) is not a new concept; it has been embedded into our cultures and daily lives in different forms and names. It means a caring not only for ourselves, but also for our future generations. SD usually covers 3 aspects: Socio-cultural, Environmental and Economic, which are also known as the Triple Bottom Line of businesses.

In Hong Kong, it is the long-term goal of the SAR Government to achieve SD by making HK a clean, comfortable and pleasant home, and this direction would require not just more green rules and measures, but a fundamental change of all stakeholders' mindset and behaviour. All parties have to work together in partnership to improve our quality of life while reducing the environmental burdens we put on our neighbours and tomorrow's generations.

Currently, education has been accorded the highest priority for SD in many economies including Mainland China and HK. The global initiative of the UN Decade of Education in Sustainable Development (DESD) (UNESCO, 2005) aims to integrate the SD concepts and practices into all levels and dimensions of education. The DESD plan covers more than the eco-centric concerns, it also focuses on the quality of human (not individual) life. These issues include human rights, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, cultural diversity, poverty reduction, sustainable consumption, and social justices. The plan also promotes HEIs to undertake SD experimental works in teaching/learning, research, student development, community engagement, institutional management and campus planning.

As one of the foremost advocates for green campus in the region, HSMC always upholds the principle of sustainability in its educational activities, management, and campus development. For instance, by extensively using bamboo material and adopting other green measures, we are proud of having the first academic building in

Hong Kong receiving the Hong Kong Green Building Council's 'Platinum' rating (BEAM Plus version 1.1).

However, although many university students have gained a deeper understanding of sustainability and green buildings than before, they are still restrained by the narrow mindsets of environmental protections. They seem to rely too much on modern green measures to reduce energy/resources use, but not on themselves by changing their own values and daily habits. Also, many of them still do not see how they can fit into the environment themselves proactively by embracing other social and economic factors.

To further promote education for SD, we hope that this Forum on Sustainable Development in Higher Education provides an international platform for exchanging relevant ideas and experiences. We also hope this would help to pass on the torch of sustainability to the future generations.

I trust this will be an inspiring and productive Forum. Thank you very much!