



## Press Release

### Launch Ceremony for “Jockey Club Water Initiative on Sustainability and Engagement”

December 1, 2016

Being used to enjoying the convenience of obtaining fresh water with a simple turn of the tap, we may not be aware that Hong Kong is inherently a water-short city, given the increasing demand for water. The community’s misconceptions about the values of water – its multidimensionality and true economic worth – have undermined efforts directed at promoting sustainable water use and water conservation.

In view of the pressing need to raise public’s awareness of the importance of attaining long-term water sustainability and water conservation in Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust has generously funded over HK\$14.7 million to support the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), in collaborating with 6 Environmental NGOs namely Green Power, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, Hong Kong Geographical Association, The Conservancy Association, The Green Earth, World Green Organisation, to launch a three-year project entitled “Jockey Club Water Initiative on Sustainability and Engagement” (JC-WISE).

Through a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional and cross-sectoral collaboration, JC-WISE aims at elevating the level of public awareness, and appreciation, of the importance of water conservation and sustainability by enhancing the understanding of the multiple values of water through re-connecting the public with our rivers in Hong Kong; and recognising the impacts of consumption behaviour on local and distant freshwater resources through the Water Footprint concept, the first such innovative and evidence-based campaign in Hong Kong.

Officiating guests at the launch ceremony included: Mr. Eric Ma Siu-cheung, Under Secretary for Development of Development Bureau, HKSAR Government, Mr. Leong Cheung, Executive Director, Charities and Community of The Hong Kong Jockey Club, and Mr. Douglas So, Vice-President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Institutional Advancement) of HKU. Other invited guests who attended the ceremony to support the launch of JC-WISE included government departments, professional organisations, and NGOs in the environment sectors.

Mr. Eric Ma, Under Secretary for Development, HKSAR Government said, “With rapid socio-economic development and urbanisation, people gradually step away from rivers. We need to re-connect the association between people and rivers to re-affirm the multi-dimensional values of water and rivers, and to cherish freshwater as a precious resource.”

“Over the years, the Trust has been actively promoting environmental protection, through supporting different environmental community outreach and education programmes to inspire more citizens to live a greener life. Through the JC-WISE, we hope to raise public awareness of the importance of attaining long-term water sustainability for Hong Kong, and subsequently to change

their attitude and behavior towards water usage and conservation,” Mr. Leong Cheung, Executive Director, Charities and Community of The Hong Kong Jockey Club said.

Dr. Frederick Lee, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences & Project Co-Investigator said, “This programme is the first large-scale project to promote the Water Footprint concept and the multiple values of freshwater in the community. An original, innovative and user-friendly Water Footprint Calculator—the first of its kind in Hong Kong—will be developed at mobile and online platforms for calculating the Water Footprints of popular local food items. A GIS-based database with open access to public and guided field-trip under the “My River, My Community” scheme will reconnect the community with our city’s rivers and river basins in Hong Kong to enhance a full understanding of their multiple values.”

The first 4K drone video in Hong Kong illustrating the multiple functions of our city’s rivers was screened at the Ceremony to rekindled the spark in relationship between viewers and freshwater. It was also a kick-off of a series of professional drone videos on Hong Kong’s selected rivers to be produced by the Project. An innovative exhibition and interesting animation about the Water Footprint of a hamburger were presented at the Ceremony as well to help people visualise the concept, which would form a foundation for the reach-out campaign to the community through different engagement activities, e.g. Water Fun Fest.

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