

"Youth Declaration on Protecting World Heritage " established by secondary school students from HK and the GBA

2023 Hong Kong – Greater Bay Area
Secondary School Model UNESCO
Conference on World Heritage

HONG KONG, CHINA, November 28, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On November 25, 2023, the UNESCO Hong Kong Association and the Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development held the "2023 Hong Kong - Greater Bay Area (GBA) Secondary School Model UNESCO Conference on World Heritage". 162 secondary school students from 30 schools in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area passed the preliminary and participated in the conference. Student delegations represented 54 different countries, each proposed innovative solutions to protect World Heritage, and formed consensus to establish "Youth Declaration on Protecting World Heritage"(the Declaration) through insightful discussion and negotiation.

The conference empowered youth to actively explore international affairs, broaden their international horizons, and promoted the exchange and respect of culture between students from Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area, cultivating sustainable future talents with Hong Kong roots, national pride, and a global perspective.

Prof. Karen Cheung, President of UNESCO Hong Kong Association, Mr. Chiang Chi ho, Ivanhoe, Commissioner for Cultural Heritage Conservation of the Development Bureau of the



Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Manuel Innocencio de Lacerda Santos Junior, Consul General of Brazil in Hong Kong, Mr. Luis Fernando Orozco Barrera, Consul General of Colombia in Hong Kong, Mr. Mostafa Shabanipour, Consul of the Consulate General of Iran in Hong Kong, Ms. Yip Lai Lai, Deputy General Manager of the Corporate Social Responsibility Office of the Bank of China (Hong Kong), and Mr. Anthony Cheung, director of the Sprinkles (HK) Charity Foundation Limited and the Supervisory Board member of the World Benchmarking Alliance, were invited as the officiating guests of the conference.



The conference was sponsored by the Bank of China (Hong Kong), co-organized by the Sprinkles (HK) Charity Foundation Limited, and supported by the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government of the People's Republic of China, the Development Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government of the People's Republic of China, College of Professional and Continuing Education, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong University of Education, the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers, and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Hong Kong), and other educational institutions in Hong Kong. Consulate Generals in Hong Kong including Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, also supported the conference and offered messages of congratulations.

The welcoming remark was delivered by Prof. Karen Cheung. She expressed that the conference enhanced students' ability to engage in meaningful and collaborative discussion international issues through immersive research-based learning. From independent research and preparation, in-depth experience, team-based strategy presentation, to discussions and negotiation, and ultimately drawing insights on the strategies of different countries to protect world heritage to establishing the declaration, the process transformed knowledge to cognitive understanding and tangible actions, effectively cultivating students' interdisciplinary skills such as negotiation, critical thinking, and system thinking.

Mr. Chiang Chi ho, Ivanhoe appraised the importance of the conference in raising youth's awareness and encouraging them to actively think and participate in the protection of cultural and natural heritage. He pointed out that protecting World Heritage and ensuring its sustainable development requires international partnership, cross-sector collaboration, stakeholders, and public engagement. During this conference, the students were able to appreciate, respect, learn and evaluate on the strategies of protecting world heritage in different countries. This

experiential learning experience will help young people to participate in the protection of precious cultures and monuments in Hong Kong and around the world.

With participants from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, this conference was unique and significant as it connected “local, national and international”. During the conference, negotiation and the integration of ideas helped the students to understand and appreciate each other’s perspective, encouraging them to work together to contribute their youth power to international issues. Professional adjudicators including Mrs Rosa S.F. Lok, the Former Assistant Director of Housing (Housing Subsidies) of The Hong Kong Housing Authority, Member of The Hong Kong Institute of Architectural Conservationists, Dr Lau Leung Kwok Prudence, Assistant Professor and the Associate Head of Department of the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts of The Education University of Hong Kong, and Dr WONG Tai Choi Richard, Lecturer at the Department of Science and Environmental Studies of The Education University of Hong Kong gave insightful suggestions to the final “declaration”.

In the 'Declaration,' students advocated that youth should act as 'heritage ambassadors who safeguard our ancient treasures.' At a personal level, individuals can raise awareness of World Heritage protection through social media. At the school level, research-based World Heritage projects could be integrated into courses and curriculums on sustainable development. On a societal level, youths could become 'Green Citizens Youth Ambassadors,' participating in local and international voluntary work for heritage protection and taking part in cultural exchange tours. Students from all delegations call for global cooperation to address challenges faced by World Heritage sites, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and destructive urban development, and to inherit these priceless treasures shared by humankind.

UNESCO Hong Kong Association will further amplify the influence of this conference by promoting the "Declaration" to local, national, and international platforms, to spread voices of youth from Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area.

In response to global and local climate action, the conference also achieved the level of "excellence" in the "UNSDGs Towards Net Zero Event Recognition Award". By calculating the energy consumption of on-site equipment, carbon emissions from the transportation of attendees, and purchasing the "Voluntary Cancellation Certificate" issued by the UNFCCC to offset the same amount of carbon dioxide emission of the event, the conference achieved net zero carbon emission. The conference also encouraged the student participants to take low-carbon measures during the event, such as “Bring Your Own Bottle”, use public transport and waste sorting facilities to enhance its educational impact.

More Information: <https://unesco.hk/web/munesco-conference-heritage/>

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