

Celebration of UN International Day for Biological Diversity was successfully held  
in Hong Kong



International Day for Biological Diversity  
22 May



Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are UNESCO's major projects. The theme this year 'We're part of the solution' was a continuation of the last year's theme 'Our solutions are in nature', it signifies that ecological conservation relies on collaborative effort by all concerned. As members of the China National Commission for UNESCO, the regional host of the UN75 Dialogue, and the registered member of the UN Global Compact, UNESCO Hong Kong Association (UHKA) and Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development (HiESD) are committed to promote the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as to propel the 'UN 2030 Agenda' locally.



On the 22nd of May, 2021, 10am, UHKA and HiESD co-organized the Space-Exposed Seed Nursery Project Seed Presentation Ceremony in Hong Kong with the theme of celebrating UN International Day for Biological Diversity. The ceremony consisted of on-site guests' speeches, seed presentation, and online keynote presentation.



Professor Karen Cheung delivered speech on the Theme Day

The UN International Day for Biological Diversity - Space-Exposed Seed Nursery Project Seed Presentation Ceremony (Hong Kong), began with an opening speech by **Prof. Karen Cheung, Executive President and Secretary-General of UHKA, and Director of HiESD.** In her speech, Professor Cheung pointed out that the establishment of the UN International Day for Biological Diversity aims to raise awareness and promote better understanding of Biological Diversity issues among the public. Both themes of 2020 and 2021, ‘Our solutions are in nature’ and ‘We’ re part of the solution’, remind the public that the biological diversity might be the solution to numerous challenges facing sustainable development. Prof. Cheung reviewed 3 goals that were set in the ‘Convention on Biological Diversity’: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. She also highlighted the unique contribution UNESOC has made in terms of the nature, social sciences, culture, education, and information dissemination, as well as conservation and fair use of biological diversity. Such contribution includes establishing standard for documentations, reports on empirical observations and interdisciplinary research, enhancing public awareness to biological diversity and sustainable development through education, highlighting the connection between cultural diversity and biodiversity. In addition, Prof. Cheung shared Hong Kong's first Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2021) (the Plan) with audiences, highlighting works that have been done in education, including the ‘Space-Exposed Seed Nursery Project’, jointly promoted by UHKA and HiESD. The Plan will integrate educational, experimental, and vocational elements, promoting experiential teaching and research-based learning. At last, she called for active collaboration between

all parties in the society to take actions on biodiversity conservation to improve the well-being of both the present and the future generation.



Mr. Eddie Ng Hak-kim, GBS, JP gives speech

Mr. Eddie Ng Hak-kim, GBS, JP, former Secretary for Education of Hong Kong, quoted a set of statistics in his speech to emphasize the importance of biological diversity to humans' livelihood and food safety. He also stressed the significance of 'Space-Exposed Seed Nursery Project' in promoting the education of biodiversity and gave his support. The project is a part of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Programme, offering experiential courses by combining aerospace and space technology, as to develop innovative ways of teaching. Finally, he emphasized the importance of teachers training and students' research in this regard.



Mr. Wong Kwan-yu, SBS, JP delivered speech



Mr. Wong Kwan-yu, SBS, JP, President of Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers, expressed that although the application of aerospace technology is very broad, the opportunities for teachers and students in Hong Kong to visit the aerospace base are limited. In this project, UHKA and HiESD have introduced space-exposed seeds to local schools. Through the process of observing and planting, students would become more conscious of their relationship with nature, therefore enhancing students' awareness of natural conservation. The project is commendable for being customized and tailored to students' interest and makes use of aerospace technology to further enhance such interest in exploring biological knowledge.





Ivan Chan, Programme Officer of HiESD, introduced the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) – the Space-Exposed Seed Nursery Project. He reviewed the history of the project from research to planting. Followed by that was the Seed Presentation Ceremony, which was presented by Prof. Karen Cheung, Executive President of UHKA, Mr. Ng Hak-kim, former Secretary for Education of Hong Kong, Mr. Wong Kwan-yu, President of Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers, Mr. Kenny Cheung, Owner of Love Moon Happy Holiday Farm, and Prof. Ying Yu Hing, Vice President of UHKA. Those space-exposed seeds have travelled to the Space and were brought back by “ShiJian (Practice) 10”. The types of seeds include cowpea, tomato, and Mimosa pudica (the third generation). The distribution boxes contain both seeds that are space-exposed and non-space-exposed for comparative studies. Participating schools include: Chinese Foundation Secondary School (CFSS), Wai Chow Public School (Sheung Shui), AD & FD POHL Leung Sing Tak School, Fukien secondary school affiliated school, Aplichau Kaifong Primary School and St. Paul's Secondary School.



Mr. Dickson Ho, The Principal of CFSS

Mr. Dickson Ho, Principal of CFSS, shared CFSS’ s experiences from participating

in this project. Based on this topic of ‘Biological Diversity’, the school has introduced co-curricular activities for teachers and students, enabling them to gain better understanding of UN Sustainable Development Goals, mastering these essential skills for the 21st Century. Most importantly, the project inspired students to take initiative to study, explore, and be more aware of nature conservation through the process of space-exposed seed planting and campus greening including STREAM activities.



Mr. Zhao Hui

Prof. KC Ho, BBS, JP

In the online sessions, **Mr. Zhao Hui, Secretary General of Space Breeding Industry Innovation Alliance**, elaborated on the relationship between aerospace seed nursery and biological diversity, space exploration activities and biodiversity conservation technology. He invited Hong Kong School Alliances to join ‘A Seed’s Journey into Space’, a programme led by Academician Mr. Qi Faren, the Chief Scientist. He expressed great wishes that the event could nurture a spirit among students to learn about science, apply them, and promote scientific studies, implanting ‘a scientific seed’ in the mind of students. Mr. Zhao actively responded to questions raised by guests to provide more in depth understanding of China’s aerospace technology and space breeding. **Prof. KC Ho, BBS, JP, Founder of Polar Research Institute of Hong Kong**, introduced Arctic animals’ growth habits and emphasized the importance of biodiversity protection. Such protection may start from preserving animal habitats, food sources, breeding, and raising awareness of how climate change influence the environment, and how it severely affected the food chain. Prof. Ho explained that in order to promote sustainable development, biological diversity protection relies on mutual support in the ecological system as to balance the society, the economy,

and the environment. Biological diversity is closely related to our daily life, therefore we should be grateful of the “green mountain” as our precious resources. At the end of his speech, Professor Ho encouraged young people to participate in more scientific research projects and learn to make good use of resources in a sustainable way.



Professor Ying Yu Hong, MH, the Vice President of UHKA, concluded by reiterating the project’s objectives - biological diversity is the foundation in re-building for a better homeland, with Nature-Based Solutions we can overcome emerging climate issues, health issues, food and water safety, and sustainable livelihood challenges. On behalf of the organizer, Professor Ying thanked the supporting organizations and participating schools for their active engagement. After the official closing of the event, guests signed their names and the slogan of "International Day of Biological Diversity" on the board to show their support and took photos.





Group Photo in front of the sign board

Prof. Karen Cheung (Right 3), Mr. Eddie Ng (Right 2), Mr. Wong Kwan-yu (Left 3), Mr. Dickson Ho, the Principal (Right 1), Mr. Law Siu Wing Lawrence, the Principal (Left 1), and Miss Wong Chi Mei, the Associate Dean (Left 2)

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