



**HKU to hold the 8th International Conference on Marine Pollution and Ecotoxicology -
An advanced understanding of marine pollution and changes of marine ecosystems**

June 20, 2016

The University of Hong Kong (HKU) will hold an opening ceremony for the 8th International Conference on Marine Pollution and Ecotoxicology (the Conference) tomorrow (June 21, Tuesday). The conference, co-organized by the School of Biological Sciences, HKU, and the State Key Laboratory in Marine Pollution, City University of Hong Kong, will end on June 24 (this Friday).

The "International Conferences on Marine Pollution and Ecotoxicology", supported and sponsored by the United Nations, have been signature events in the international arena of marine environmental research since 1995. This year's event will be attended by some 200 scientists and environmental managers from 16 countries. Its aims are to discuss and advance the understanding of local, regional and global marine pollution problems, in the hope that such problems may be more easily solved in the future. Several world renowned experts will be invited to share their experience and views with local scientists from Hong Kong and China.

Details of the Opening Ceremony:

Date : June 21, 2016 (tomorrow)

Time : 8:45am - 9:45am

Venue: Rayson Huang Theatre, HKU

Officiating guests: Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, JP

Executive Director of United Nations' Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), Mr Stephen Adrian Ross;

HKU Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Peter Mathieson

HKU Associate Dean of Science, Professor Kenneth Leung Mei-yee

About the Conference

The 8th International Conference on Marine Pollution and Ecotoxicology will focus on the following eight key areas, which are likely to be important in the coming years, both in Hong Kong and worldwide:

1. Climate changes and marine ecosystems;
2. Chemical contaminants and issues of emerging concern;
3. Coastal eutrophication and hypoxia;
4. Multiple stressors and biological responses;
5. Seafood safety and sustainable mariculture;
6. Environmental policy and education;
7. Pollution monitoring and control technology;
8. Human and ecological risk assessment.

The first of these involves a topic on everyone's lips: climate change and marine ecosystems. This subject area, in many parts of the world, has invoked controversial opinions. It is, however, beyond doubt that major changes are occurring in our global environments, which are strongly correlated with temperature changes, ocean acidification and rises in sea levels. Some of the keynote speakers, who are globally-recognized experts in their respective areas, will address the related issues in their speeches.

The ubiquitous worldwide occurrence of endocrine disrupting chemicals and chemicals of emerging concern (e.g. antibiotics, micro-plastics, nanomaterials) and their effects on marine biota and public health, albeit at very low concentrations, have become a major global concern, especially in the Pearl River Delta, now known as 'the world's factory' as well as one of the world's largest dumping site of electronic waste. Understanding the long-term effects of these chemicals, their environmental fates as well as controlling their disposal is of vast importance. A thorough scientific evaluation of their toxicity and ecological risks in marine environments is urgently needed, and this important research area will be addressed by a number of presentations in this conference.

Hypoxia and eutrophication continue to cause major changes in marine ecosystems around the world, as well as considerable economic losses to fisheries. These long standing problems will be exacerbated in the coming years due to global warming, especially in developing countries where construction of waste treatment facilities lags well behind ever-increasing population demands. Alarming, the number of hypoxic "dead zones" has doubled every decade, and some 600 dead

zones have been found all over the world by the United Nations, including the deltas of the Yangtze and Pearl Rivers, two of the three largest estuaries in China.

For programme details, please visit <http://www.biosch.hku.hk/icmpe8/programme.html>

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