



Welcome Speech

By Ms Luciana Wong, Chairperson of The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management Hong Kong

The Honourable Mr. Keith Kwok, Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport & Works Bureau (Env), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning.

As the Chairperson and on behalf of the Hong Kong branch of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, I welcome all of you to this conference.

As the title of the conference implies, the purpose of our gathering today is to explore the key challenges towards achieving air emission control targets in the Pearl River Delta in a sustainable manner in the aspects of power supply, transport and economic development. To put it more simply, we are here to consider ways of “Living Under Blue Skies”, to bring back the clean and clear air which we once enjoyed in the past, and to safeguard it for the generations of the future.

Air pollution is becoming increasingly severe in South China. Air quality in Guangzhou, Dongguan and Foshan are reported to be the worst polluted cities in the Pearl River Delta. As individuals, I'm sure each of us has memories and anecdotes of how it used to be. For me, I would like to quote from the song ‘Green Fields’, “Once there were green fields kissed by the sun, once there were valleys where rivers used to run, once there were blue skies with white clouds high above”. The lyrics remind me of the pleasant scenery I once saw and took for granted as a youngster on the train journey to Dongguan in the 70's. However, when I recently returned to my father's hometown a few weeks ago, there were no more blue skies, and no more clean streams running through the landscape, but there were many factories and it was obvious that the air was bad. Although I could get clean water by drinking bottled water, I had no alternative but to breathe the polluted air during my stay. For those of us who live and travel in the region, the problem is all too self evident even without the aid of NOX, SOX, API and all the other indices to tell us so.

Air quality is directly related to China's energy consumption patterns. Population growth, rapid industrialization, urbanization and higher per capita incomes will ensure an increase in domestic energy demand and an increase in the number of motor vehicles. The pollutants, such as the respirable suspended particulates, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxides, ozone are all hazardous to health.

The question is, are we willing to pay to avoid the environmental damage that comes with the economic benefits of rapid industrialization and urbanization? As one of the leading professional bodies in Hong Kong, CIWEM is a multi-disciplinary organization for those who are committed to the sustainable management and development of the environment. This conference will provide a platform for you to exchange your views with fellow professionals and interested parties. Please join hands with CIWEM HK and the Business Environment Council to find a way to outperform the control targets and as quickly as possible.

Before I finish, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Jimmy Leung, Professor Bill Barron, and Paul Zimmerman, who have provided valuable advice to the committee since last September when CIWEM initiated the conference; and many thanks to the Business Environment Council for supporting, managing the logistics, and making this conference possible. Lastly, CIWEM is particularly grateful to all the guest speakers, panellists and the panel moderators – thank you for your participation and contributions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, be you public servants, business leaders, academics, scientists, and engineers - the people of this region have set us a difficult and important challenge. Let us rise to it and work together at it so that we can see more beautiful days with blue skies.

I hope all of you find this conference useful and have a fruitful and enjoyable day. Thank you very much.