



**Speech**  
**by Mr. K. K. Kwok**  
**Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works**  
**(Environment)/ Director of Environmental Protection**

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Prof. Anna Sohmen, Mr. Andrew Long, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here this afternoon to attend the Award Presentation Ceremony for the Hong Kong Eco-Products Award 2005. It is very encouraging to see so many friends from the business community on this 'green' occasion.

Protection of our environment needs concerted efforts of every one of us in the society. Participation of the business sector is imperative in sustaining a quality environment. Unfortunately, the misconception that environmental protection only leads to higher costs but no rewards to businesses makes some businesses hesitate in taking up their responsibility for the environment. The reality is, of course, the contrary.

Nowadays, customers and the society at large expect much more from businesses. Incorporating environmental elements into the companies' daily running makes good business sense as it enhances customer satisfaction, increases community respect, raises productivity and gives the company a leading-edge over competitors. A company that demonstrates responsibility for its actions in protecting the environment projects a positive corporate image which boosts staff morale while attracts both customers and business partners. Companies overlook or ignore their environmental responsibilities at their peril, as they risk limiting their business opportunities and losing out in the increasingly competitive market in the long run.

I am happy to see that more and more businesses have acknowledged their role and responsibility in preserving our environment. I must thank the Business Environment Council and the coorganizers and supporters of the Eco-Product Award for their efforts in promoting environmental responsibility among companies.

By integrating environmental considerations early at the planning and design stage and throughout the production process, the costs to the society at large in combating pollution problems will be greatly reduced. I would like to commend the pioneers in the business sector that design and manufacture products contributing to the environment and I urge other companies to follow suit.

To lead by example, the government adopts a green procurement policy to help create a market for environmentally friendly products.

I would like to congratulate the award winners on your outstanding achievements, and thank you for your commitment to protection of the environment. I would also like to thank all the devoted friends in the business sector for organizing this meaningful programme. Thank you.