



Press Release | For Immediate Release

2022 Integral Conversation Sparks Important Dialogue on Sustainability

Hong Kong, September 5, 2022 – The 9th Integral Conversation took place from 1 to 2 September in Guilin, with the theme “Sailing Toward Sustainability”. More than 300 guests from seven countries joined the event online and in-person, to share their insights and experiences on a range of topics: Artificial Intelligence, Preserving Mankind’s Health, Environmental Protection, and Carbon Neutrality. The conference stimulated a lively exchange of ideas on the best way forward to achieve sustainable development.

Welcome Remarks from the Guilin Municipal Government

At the welcome dinner on Thursday, Guilin’s Vice Mayor **Wang Xin** lauded Esquel Group for setting a great example with its environmental protection initiatives. He stated that Guilin needs more companies like Esquel and the participation of its millions of residents to make the environmental goals into a reality. This echoes the theme of this year’s Integral Conversation, “Sailing Toward Sustainability”, in which the protection of the ecosystem goes hand in hand with the sustainable growth of enterprises.

Fireside Chat

At the Fireside Chat, Esquel Ventures President **Wesley Choi** spoke with XPeng Inc. Vice Chairman and President **Dr. Brian Gu**, who projected that autonomous driving would become a norm in eight years. He also envisioned future new-energy vehicles traveling beyond land, such as at low altitudes (with flying cars), and even underwater; and non-trunk roads might be equipped with technology for low-speed robots. During the session, he invited the audience to imagine a Guilin where we were able to fly low on safe routes while enjoying the city’s picturesque scenery, including the Pearl River.

Opening Speech

On the following day, Esquel Group Vice Chairman **Teresa Yang** kicked off the conference with the opening speech. She said this year is of special significance as it marks the 10th anniversary of Esquel in Guilin and Integral Conversation is finally able to connect with in-person attendees

again. It is also the first the time for Esquel to host the event in hybrid model and at Integral as well.

She emphasized that we have come to a critical moment where governments and corporations around the world must work together, taking swift and robust actions on climate change and global warming. This is the last call to get climate emergency under control. For that reason, Integral Conversation has invited experts and thought leaders from diverse fields to explore issues of climate change and sustainable development, while sharing their insights and ideas on the best practices to tackle the hurdles and challenges of achieving zero emissions.

Keynote Address

The first keynote speaker was **Dr. Harry Shum**, Adjunct Professor at Tsinghua University, Foreign Member of the National Academy of Engineering, U.S.A, and International Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, U.K. Dr. Shum noted that in the near future, we would be accompanied by AI solutions. For instance, the powerful AI system of unmanned vehicles supports extensive features, from audio to visual, while the ubiquitous Siri and Xiaoice are examples of interactive chatbots powered by AI. He added that technology is a double-edged sword – the advancements brought by AI also come with their fair share of ethical and legal conundrums. These can be addressed through the concerted effort of governments and professional organizations in setting up monitoring mechanisms in advance, as well as members of industries and academia in self-regulating and adhering to the relevant standards. Actions like these are necessary to regulate the application of AI so that it can better facilitate the sustainable development of society.

Wellness Panel

The Wellness Panel was hosted by **Junna Shi**, Partner at McKinsey, and featured guests from the medical and pharmaceutical fraternity. On the topic “Preserving Mankind’s Health”, We-Doctor Group President & CTO and former Global Vice President of IBM **Dr. Matthew Wang** said that the field of medical technology is advancing at a rapid pace and the intensive R&D by many players in AR and VR has greatly benefited medical education and technology. AI, the cloud, and big data are integral to intelligent health systems, which can help humans deal with urgent medical crises more effectively.

Dr. Ren Feng, CSO and Head of Drug R&D at Insilico Medicine, stated that the traditional drug R&D process requires 10 to 15 years from development to marketing, at a cost of over US\$2 billion. This translates to a mere 2.1% return on investment. Furthermore, there is also the



chance of clinical trial failure due to issues of safety and efficacy with new drugs. With AI facilitating the R&D process, researchers can now focus on the more critical areas to increase a drug's clinical success rate, and complete drug studies faster at a lower cost.

Dr. Jia Fujun, Director of Guangdong Mental Health Center, Director of the Institute of Mental Health of Guangdong Provincial People's Hospital, Doctor of Medicine, Doctoral Supervisor, and Leading Medical Talent in Guangdong Province, pointed out that good health involves more than being physically fit or illness-free—mental and social well-being also comes in the equation. He emphasized the vital importance of education and the adoption of various measures to heighten people's awareness on mental health.

Integral's Grand Opening Ceremony

The conference also featured the grand opening of Integral, Esquel Group's Sustainable Development Garden. Leaders from the Guilin Municipal Government, guests of Integral Conversation, and employees of the Group celebrate the momentous milestone (for more stories on Integral and ideas on sustainable development, please visit the official Esquel Group website: <https://www.esquel.com/integral>).

Keynote Address

In the closing keynote, **Professor Wang Tianyi**, Professor at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) and Tsinghua University, and Co-Director of Public Private Partnership Research Center of Tsinghua University, engaged the audience in an open and in-depth discussion on the topic of "Environmental Protection and Carbon Neutrality". He spoke of the disruption mankind has caused, especially through industrialization, to the once "perfect" balance of the earth's ecosystem. To address the twin challenges of pollution and climate change, he added that we must recognize the shared roots and synchronous nature of the two, and the possibility and necessity of reducing pollution and carbon emissions in tandem.

Closing Remarks

While delivering the closing remarks, Esquel Group CEO **Edgar Tung** revealed that the Group had reduced its emissions by 25% as of 2021, compared to 2018. As such, the Group is confident about halving its carbon footprint by 2035. To fulfil the Net Zero Pledge for 2050, Esquel will continue to innovate and collaborate with its partners to attain this ultimate target as soon as possible. On that note, he highlighted a series of efforts and achievements made by the Group in promoting sustainability, from building digital and intelligent benchmark factories, developing a proprietary waterless dyeing technology, to designing a digitalized carbon



management system for textile industry with Huansi and leading green campaigns such as Esquel Recycled Polo.

Tour of Integral

Toward the end of the event, guests were invited to a tour of Integral, where they experienced a wide range of facilities all designed to be more energy-efficient and eco-friendly. Integral represents the balance of sustainable development, progress, nature, and technology at its best.

Kunqu Performance

After a fruitful day, the participants were treated to an exquisite rendition of the classic Kunqu opera, “The Peony Pavilion”, performed by the renowned Suzhou Kunqu Opera Theater of Jingsu, as a memorable ending to a special day.

- End -

About Integral Conversation

An annual Esquel flagship event since 2014, Integral Conversation provides thought leaders and experts from diverse fields an independent platform to exchange insights and perspectives on sustainable development models.

Discussion topics have spanned culture, education, innovation, urban planning, architecture, healthcare, and digital transformation, and how they are connected to the concept of sustainability.

Integral Conversation encourages a deep dive into the challenge of having both the environment and the economy thrive together, with Integral acting as a solid demonstration of how one sustainable development model might look like.

For more details, please visit [2022 Integral Conversation](#).



1. Esquel Group's Sustainable Development Garden in Guilin, Integral.



2. Guilin's Vice Mayor Wang Xin



3. At the Fireside Chat, Esquel Ventures President Wesley Choi (right) spoke with XPeng Inc. Vice Chairman and President Dr. Brian Gu (left).



4. Esquel Group Vice Chairman Teresa Yang kicked off the conference with the opening speech.



5. The first keynote speaker was Dr. Harry Shum, Adjunct Professor at Tsinghua University.



6. The Wellness Panel was hosted by Junna Shi, Partner at McKinsey.



7. Dr. Ren Feng, CSO and Head of Drug R&D at Insilico Medicine



8. Dr. Matthew Wang, We-Doctor Group President & CTO and former Global Vice President of IBM



9. Dr. Jia Fujun, Director of Guangdong Mental Health Center, Director of the Institute of Mental Health of Guangdong Provincial People's Hospital, Doctor of Medicine, Doctoral Supervisor, and Leading Medical Talent in Guangdong Province



9. Integral's grand opening with Chinese Lion Dance performance.



10. Professor Wang Tianyi, Professor at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) and Tsinghua University, and Co-Director of Public Private Partnership Research Center of Tsinghua University



11. Esquel Group CEO Edgar Tung



12. Tour of Integral

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13. Kunqu opera performance