



Press Release | For Immediate Release

2021 Integral Conversation “Emerging from a Time of Uncertainty” on the long road to post-pandemic recovery

Hong Kong, November 16, 2021 – On November 12, global thought leaders and industry experts gathered virtually to exchange valuable insights at Integral Conversation’s eighth conference. The conference revolved around the theme “Emerging from a Time of Uncertainty”, exploring how governments, corporations and individuals continue to pave the way to a greener future along the rocky road towards economic recovery amid pandemic-induced risks and opportunities.

Opening Remarks

Teresa Yang, Vice Chairman of Esquel Group, in her opening remarks to this year’s conference, shared how Esquel has set nine prioritized United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, detailed in a newly released 2021 Esquel UNSDGs Progress Report on Esquel’s website. She noted that, “These nine prioritized SDGs most closely align with the two objectives that constitute Esquel’s vision – optimizing our operations to tackle climate change, and narrowing the wealth gap.” She also mentioned that Esquel Group is one of the key participants in the Cotton China Sustainable Development Program, a sustainable cotton initiative launched this year.

Following the opening remarks, **Wang Xin**, Vice Mayor of Guilin City, gave a speech on behalf of the Guilin Municipal People’s Government to warmly greet all participants, and thank everyone who has helped to support Guilin’s development throughout the years. He noted that Esquel plays an essential role in protecting Guilin’s Lijiang River and pushing forward China’s emphasis on ecological civilization and sustainable values.

Opening Keynote

Rosanna Peeling, Professor and Chair of Diagnostics Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Director of the International Diagnostic Centre, delivered the conference’s opening keynote presentation. She highlighted two key takeaways from the pandemic: COVID-19 has exposed the fault lines in the world’s healthcare systems, and the inequities in access to life-saving commodities. Testing has been vital since the beginning of the pandemic, but global competition in securing testing reagents and kits has led to huge global inequities, with Africa being shut out of the diagnostic market. Professor Peeling urged everyone to work together to achieve sustainable recovery, stating: “No one is safe until we’re all safe.”

In-depth dialogs

This year's panel discussions explored the impact of the pandemic on ecotourism and culture, the road to net zero, and the role of corporations:

- The conference's first panel covered **"Ecotourism and Culture – preserving nature and communities while redefining travel"**. Moderated by **Patrick Yeung**, Professor of Practice (Tourism Marketing) of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the panel speakers discussed the current state of travel, and how it has affected global tourism and cultures. **Kaye Chon**, Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation and Professor in International Hospitality Management, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, pointed out that in the last 20 years, the tourism industry has believed in a 'the more the better' mentality. However, he believes that sustainable tourism can mean helping small B&Bs that are training rescued girls from human trafficking to reintegrate them into society, for example. **Christopher Law**, Founding Director of Oval Partnership, shared about several sustainability projects that approach eco-tourism from different angles. "Deep green" hotels, for example, are built to save energy and water, as well as foster a green lifestyle through food and activities with an educational aspect. **Ho Ren Yung**, Senior Vice President at Brand HQ of Banyan Tree Group, said that their hotel chain has a history of regenerating sites and lands where they build. While most people associate the term 'eco' with the concept of nature conservation only, she believes that the term should be seen as a balance between the conservation of nature and culture.
- The conference's second panel, **"Net Zero – identifying road bumps and accelerators along the path to net zero"**, was moderated by **Norman Tien**, Taikoo Professor of Engineering and Chair Professor of Microsystems Technology, The University of Hong Kong. The speakers discussed their thoughts on the latest COP26, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by the world at large. **Christine Loh**, Chief Development Strategist at the Institute for the Environment, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said she believes that governments need to be brave about making net zero plans. This requires each country to pass policies adapted to each different political system, while looking to innovative pieces of legislation such as the UK's Climate Law as inspirations. **Jean-Pascal Tricoire**, Chairman and CEO of Schneider Electric, said that to reach net zero in time, we need to do three times more what we are doing today, three times faster. He holds cautious optimism from a globalization perspective, as he believes the climate agenda acts as a point of convergence. **Zhang Jianyu**, Executive Director of BRI Green Development Institute, said that the timing of the eighth Integral Conversation is great as it coincides with the US and China agreeing to work towards climate change. He added that it was a big relief that these two major players are willing to make resource commitments to reach carbon neutrality.
- **"Role of Corporations – cultivating forward-looking corporate practices while navigating new global unknowns"** was the conference's third panel topic, moderated by **Janet Pau**,

Executive Director of Asia Business Council. The panel speakers unveiled their personal commitments to sustainability as well as their views on what has changed in regard to the expectations on corporations today. **Diana Cesar**, Group General Manager of HSBC, and Executive Director and Chief Executive of Hang Seng Bank, revealed that stakeholders and customers are setting increasingly higher standards and expectations for sustainability-linked products and services. **Lim Boon Heng**, Chairman of Temasek Holdings, added that with work-from-home models growing more widespread due to COVID-19, regions must adapt their strategies in boosting their competitiveness as a business hub. **Wang Tianyi**, Chairman, China Everbright Environment (Group) Limited and Part-time Professor and Co-Director of Public-Private Partnership Research Center, Tsinghua University, said that to protect existing ecologies, expanding renewable energy sources is vital. He added that since the industrial revolution was driven by enterprises, enterprises have an inescapable responsibility to achieve carbon neutrality.

Esquel's Net Zero Pledge

This year's conference also involved a virtual tour of Integral in lieu of a physical visit. The tour updated viewers on the latest developments in Esquel's Sustainable Development Garden in Guilin, China, including concrete steps taken by Esquel to cut emissions from design and construction to production technologies and workplace culture.

Following the virtual tour, **Edgar Tung**, newly appointed CEO of Esquel Group, revealed Esquel's pledge to Net Zero in a special announcement. Esquel Group's goal is to halve GHG emissions by 2035, and achieve net zero by 2050. Mr. Tung said that as a global total solutions provider in textiles and apparel, tackling climate change has always been at the forefront of Esquel's vision of Making a Difference. On top of Esquel's progress so far in reducing its emissions, the Group will continue to leverage purposeful partnerships with stakeholders including the government and academia in order to lead industry-wide impacts and promote green lifestyles. Mr. Tung said, "At Esquel, alongside governments and other multinational companies, we know that we have a role to play, or more precisely, a responsibility to shoulder when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions." He added, "We will approach this ambitious goal one step at a time, and we'll be excited to share more progress with you as we move forward in this important journey."

Closing Keynote

The closing keynote speech for this year's conference was delivered by **Candace Johnson**, Founder/Co-Founder of SES ASTRA and SES Global, Loral Cyberstar-Teleport Europe, Europe Online, and OWNSAT Vice Chair of NorthStar Earth and Space Chair of the Advisory Board, Seraphim Space Capital. On the topic, "From universal access to accessing the universe with satellites: Obtaining sustainability within planetary boundaries", she noted that rapid digital transformation is introducing exciting possibilities in space and bringing us closer to universal access to data, inviting the next generation of entrepreneurs to step up. The rise of global temperature and disappearing ice caps have been tracked over decades through satellites, allowing us to recognize the urgency of climate change.



“There can be no doubt that the challenge today is to save our world, our planet, our home,” Ms. Johnson said.

Closing Remarks

Dee Poon, Managing Director of Brands and Distribution at Esquel Group, gave her closing remarks to wrap up the event. She said that this year’s conference reiterates that ambitious goals regarding climate change cannot be reached alone. This is now a time for everyone to think about how to act together for meaningful change amid external pressures. Ms. Poon said, “This is the time to dig deep and set foundational roots for unshakeable growth in the year to come. We need to be intentional in the seeds we sow in order to attain sustainable development.”

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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 [2021 Integral Conversation](#).

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1.

Nestled in the scenic lands of Guilin, Integral is Esquel's Sustainable Development Garden project pursues sustainable development by setting a standard for the future of the textile and apparel industry through a combination of modern manufacturing, quality employment and innovation.



2.

Opening: Teresa Yang, Vice Chairman of Esquel Group, commenced the 2021 Integral Conversation with warm opening remarks.



3.

Guilin Official: Wang Xin, Vice Mayor of Guilin City, warmly greeted participants as a

representative of the Guilin Municipal People’s Government and highlighted Esquel’s role in emphasizing ecological civilization and sustainability in China.



4. Opening keynote: Rosanna Peeling, Professor and Chair of Diagnostics Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Director of the International Diagnostic Centre, highlighted key takeaways two years into the COVID-19 pandemic.



5. Panel 1: Patrick Yeung, Professor of Practice (Tourism Marketing) of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (top left) moderated the first panel “Ecotourism and Culture – preserving nature and communities while redefining travel Redefining corporate purpose in the new normal”, with panelists Kaye Chon, Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation and Professor in International Hospitality Management, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (top right); Christopher Law, Founding Director of Oval Partnership (bottom left); and Ho Ren Yung, Senior Vice President at Brand HQ of Banyan Tree Group (bottom right).



6. Panel 2: Professor Norman Tien, Taikoo Professor of Engineering and Chair Professor of Microsystems Technology, The University of Hong Kong (top left) moderated the conference’s second panel, “Net Zero – identifying road bumps and accelerators along the path to net zero”, with panelists Christine Loh, Chief Development Strategist at the Institute for the Environment, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (bottom right); Jean-Pascal Tricoire, Chairman and CEO of Schneider Electric (top right); and Dr. Zhang Jianyu, Executive Director of BRI Green Development Institute (bottom left).



7. Panel 3: Janet Pau, Executive Director of Asia Business Council (top left) moderated the third panel, “Role of Corporations – cultivating forward-looking corporate practices while navigating new global unknowns”, with panelists Diana Cesar, Group General Manager of HSBC, Executive Director and Chief Executive of Hang Seng Bank (top right); Lim Boon Heng, Chairman of Temasek Holdings (bottom left); and Wang Tianyi, Chairman, China Everbright Environment (Group) Limited and Part-time Professor and Co-Director of Public-Private Partnership Research Center, Tsinghua University (bottom right).



8.

Closing keynote: Candace Johnson, Founder/Co-Founder of SES ASTRA and SES Global, Loral Cyberstar-Teleport Europe, Europe Online, and OWNSAT Vice Chair of NorthStar Earth and Space Chair of the Advisory Board, Seraphim Space Capital, gave a closing keynote presentation on the topic: “From universal access to accessing the universe with satellites: Obtaining sustainability within planetary boundaries”.



9.

Special announcement: Edgar Tung, CEO of Esquel Group, revealed Esquel’s pledge to Net Zero.



10. Closing: Dee Poon, Managing Director of Brands and Distribution at Esquel Group, wrapped up the event with closing remarks.



11. From left to right: Wesley Choi, Managing Director of Esquel Group; Edgar Tung, CEO of Esquel Group; Marjorie Yang, Chairman of Esquel Group; Teresa Yang, Vice Chairman of Esquel Group; Wilkie Wong, Managing Director of Esquel Group; and Calvin Tsang, Managing Director of Esquel Group.