

Hong Kong to Host Landmark Ocean Summit

A range of speakers will showcase innovative solutions to the global crisis of plastics in our oceans at a landmark Ocean Summit in Hong Kong later this month.

As part of the territory's first ever involvement with the Volvo Ocean Race, the Ocean Summit aims to inspire individuals, businesses, government and local communities to take action to turn the tide on plastic.

A sustainable event workshop after the Ocean Summit will then convene representatives from key Hong Kong based businesses and groups to discuss ways to embed sustainability at the heart of their operations.

The summit comes as recent data revealed that in Hong Kong, 136 tonnes of plastic bottles are thrown away each day. Globally, eight million tonnes of plastic are dumped into the ocean every year and if no action is taken, our seas will contain more plastic than fish by 2050.

"The Hong Kong Ocean Summit will bring together representatives from the worlds of sport, science, government, NGO's and the private sector, to maximise community and stakeholder engagement to raise awareness of ocean health issues, promote local initiatives and inspire meaningful action in Asia to help turn the tide on plastic," said Anne-Cecile Turner, Sustainability Programme Leader for the Volvo Ocean Race. "The events already have a proven track record for creating a foundation for positive change and providing a platform to share solutions and innovative ideas to the problem of plastics in our seas, something we will look forward to continuing during our Hong Kong stopover."



Last November, the Hong Kong government announced that vending machines at government premises will stop selling water in bottles of one litre or less to help combat the global crisis.

Key speakers at the event will include Stiv Wilson, Director of Campaigns, The story of Stuff; Tiza Mafira, Director, The Plastic Bag Diet (Jakarta); Oscar Wezenbeek, Managing Director, AkzoNobel Marine Coatings; Safia Qureshi, Founder and CEO of The Cup Club, Dr Ivone Mirpuri, Medical Advisor, Mirpuri Foundation and Anders Jacobson, Co-Founder and CEO of Bluewater.

The Ocean Summit, taking place on 22nd January in the Volvo Pavilion in the Race Village in Kai Tak Runway Park, will also be attended by a host of industry leaders from across Asia, Volvo Ocean Race sailors, NGOs and ocean advocates.

The one-day event will be hosted by Paul Rose, explorer, television presenter and Vice President of the Royal Geographical Society.

Following the success of Ocean Summits in Alicante, Spain and Cape Town, South Africa other host cities featuring Ocean Summits include Newport, USA on 18 May 2018, Cardiff, Wales on 5 June 2018, Gothenburg, Sweden on 18 June 2018 and The Hague, Holland on 27-28 June 2018.

The summits have already seen the release of ground breaking data on the amount of microplastics in European waters and produced a series of announcements to address the impacts of plastics on ocean health.

At the Ocean Summit in Alicante, the Spanish Government announced that it was joining the UN Clean Seas Campaign with the firm purpose of supporting this global initiative and contributing to its impact worldwide. The mayor of Alicante also announced an education campaign on plastic in all schools in the city.

Cape Town's V&A Waterfront shopping centre, which welcomes 24 million shoppers each year, announced their pledge to be free of single use plastic bags and bottles. Stopover partner WorldSport, a major events management company in Cape Town, pledged their commitment to sustainable event practices with the Volvo Ocean Race event being a benchmark from which to move forward.