

PRESS RELEASE

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Postponement of the 2022 Hong Kong Laureate Forum

Having carefully considered local and global pandemic situations and the possibility of unimpeded international travel of visitors to Hong Kong in the latter part of the year, the Board of the Council of the Hong Kong Laureate Forum Limited (the HKLF) has made the difficult decision to further postpone the inaugural Hong Kong Laureate Forum (the Forum) to the second half of 2023.

The Board of the HKLF has all along considered face-to-face exchanges and unhindered direct dialogues between Shaw Laureates and young scientists an important element of the Forum. It would greatly diminish the impact and benefits of the Forum if such sharing, networking and interaction could not take place. Thus, in May 2021, the Board of the HKLF decided to defer the inaugural Forum for a year to November 2022 as at the time the pandemic was wreaking havoc around the world, making in-person attendance of Forum improbable. Whilst the COVID-19 situation appeared to be improving in Hong Kong at the end of 2021, raising expectation that the territory could begin to open up for international travel for visitors, the Omicron induced fifth wave that swept the territory has cast serious doubt on that front. Having reached the new height of some 55,000 daily cases in early March, the number of infections remains high at around 2,000 per day.

Professor Timothy W TONG, BBS, JP, Chairman of the HKLF, said “We have been closely monitoring the pandemic situation locally as well as the Government latest restrictions on travel and other precautionary measures to help to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Our decision to postpone the event is based on the evaluation on whether unimpeded travel for visitors is likely to resume by Q4 2022. We could not see a clear path with any kind of certainty at the moment. It is, therefore, with deep regret that we announce the postponement. We know that this announcement will come as a

disappointment, not only to our Shaw Laureates and young scientists who are geared up to join the Forum this year, but also our academic partners and the scientific community who are looking forward to such an international academic-exchange event.”

Since our Shaw Laureates and other world-renowned scientists have a lot of commitments, it is imperative to provide sufficient notice to all parties concerned, including the young scientists, to facilitate the rescheduling of their plans for 2022.

What's next

The Secretariat of the HKLF will contact all stakeholders including Shaw Laureates and young scientists as well as our local and non-local academic partners individually on the deferment. Upon setting the schedule of the Forum next year, we will make an announcement.

Meanwhile, to keep the momentum of the Forum, the Secretariat has started devising new programmes as well as planning a series of online events to further strengthen the promotion of science in the community. More science-related videos and new online games will be launched to arouse and enhance public interest in science and technology in a lively and unconventional manner. The hybrid event gathering both renowned local and international female scientists and researchers, “Wonder Women in Science – Inspiring and Empowering the Next Generation”, will also be relaunched in tandem with the lifting of the COVID-19 related measures. Details of the new arrangements will be announced on the HKLF website and social media platforms in due course. We are looking forward to getting “TOGETHER”, in-person or online, again soon.

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About the Hong Kong Laureate Forum

The Hong Kong Laureate Forum (the Forum) is a world-class scientific exchange and networking event to be organised by the HKLF to aspire and connect the current and next generations of leaders in scientific pursuit. The Forum also aims to promote understanding and interests of the young generation in Hong Kong and around the world in various disciplines in science and technology, in particular Astronomy, Life Science and Medicine, and Mathematical Sciences.

The HKLF was established in May 2019 and is fully sponsored by the Lee Shau Kee Foundation. The Shaw Prize Foundation - which organises annually the renowned international award, The Shaw Prize, is the major partner of the HKLF. Since its launch, the HKLF has been putting every effort to promote science in the community and around the world as well as in preparation of the inaugural Forum.

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