

COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD

Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark 10th Anniversary Celebration Programme

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper informs members of the programme to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark (HK Geopark).

2. Background

2.1 HK Geopark is located in the northeast New Territories and the Sai Kung district of Hong Kong. The Sai Kung area boasts a wide distribution of globally rare acidic volcanic hexagonal rock columns, while the northeast New Territories is home to sedimentary rocks that represent Hong Kong's geological history over 400 million years. HK Geopark encompasses diverse habitats and great biodiversity. The local Hakka and fishing villages pride themselves on their rich history and cultural heritage.

2.2 HK Geopark became a National Geopark of China in 2009 and a member of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) in 2011. In 2015, following the formalisation of the Geopark Programme by UNESCO, HK Geopark was renamed Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark (HK Geopark).

2.3 HK Geopark is committed to the protection of the geoheritage and ecological environment within its area. A wide range of educational activities are organised to popularise earth science, such as engaging Geopark School Programme participants in in-depth exchanges with students from overseas geoparks to broaden their knowledge, thinking and horizons. We also work closely with geopark communities to drive local sustainable development. Joint efforts include operating *kaito* ferry services to Ap Chau, Kat O and Lai Chi Wo and a minibus service to the East Dam of the High Island Reservoir. This provides better access to geopark attractions and transport links for members of the local communities. HK Geopark also set up the Recommended Geopark Guide (R2G) system with the Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong

(AGHK), to ensure quality tour guide service for local and overseas visitors.

2.4 Since becoming a UNESCO programme, HK Geopark has extended its scope of geoheritage and natural heritage conservation to encompass cultural and intangible cultural heritage. Notably, the "Same Roots • Same Origins" project was set up to conserve the local cultural and intangible cultural heritage of the communities within HK Geopark. By collaborating with local academic partners in cultural research and conducting oral history interviews, we have delved deep into the vibrant history and heritage of the geopark communities and strive to preserve them. These insights not only enhance our promotional and educational efforts, but also provide new resources for local green tourism. Since 2017, we have worked closely with several geopark communities and set up four story rooms in Ap Chau, Kat O, Kau Sai Village and Lai Chi Wo to present local history and interesting stories, as well as the cultural and intangible cultural heritage of the areas. We are equally enthusiastic about promoting exchanges with other geoparks, hosting exchange forums for global and Asia Pacific geoparks, and organising workshops on various themes and training programmes. At present, HK Geopark is responsible for managing social media accounts of the Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN). We also regularly organise APGN online exchange sessions.

2.5 To mark the 10th anniversary of HK Geopark's accession to the GGN, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) will roll out a series of celebration activities and introduce new visitor facilities between July and December 2021. The 10th anniversary celebrations are organised and coordinated by the AFCD with support from local geopark communities, geopark partners and geopark tour guides.

3. **Celebration Programme**

3.1 According to the UNESCO Global Geoparks guidelines, geoparks should solicit support from geopark communities and work for their benefit. We therefore hope to organise our 10th anniversary celebrations in the geopark communities with indigenous villagers. On one hand, this collaboration will help promote engagement and capacity building to strengthen their sense of identity. On the other hand, it is an effective way to communicate local history and culture to promote the sustainable social and economic development of the geopark communities.

3.2 Some 10th anniversary celebration events will be organised jointly with geopark guides. The connections between the geoheritage and the local natural, cultural and intangible heritage will be presented in simple language and a lively and interesting way. Also highlighted will be geo-conservation and nature conservation, respect for the geopark communities and the safety code.

3.3 Our 10th anniversary celebration programme will include the following:

- (a) Community seminar: To strengthen connections and cooperation, representatives of geopark stakeholder groups will be invited to join a seminar in July to share their thoughts and experience.
- (b) Public talk: Six open talks will be arranged from July to October. Experts from different disciplines will be invited to present the geoheritage of Hong Kong Geopark, the unique culture and interesting stories of the geopark communities, and geotourism information.
- (c) Roving exhibition: Our exhibition will be held at a number of major shopping centres between July and September. It will include interactive elements to promote HK Geopark in an interesting and lively way.
- (d) Community fair: It will be staged in major geopark communities (Ap Chau, Kat O, Lai Chi Wo, Kau Sai Village and Sam Mun Tsai) and at the High Island Reservoir East Dam in November and December. Activities will include guided tours, traditional cultural performances, and various cultural and art workshops. Visitors can enjoy an in-depth experience of Hong Kong Geopark's unique geology, ecology and heritage. These events are ideal for the whole family.
- (e) Geopark Master: Specially designed geopark passports will be available free of charge at all geopark visitor centres. Visitors can have their passports stamped at geopark attractions. These lovely souvenirs will encourage participants to explore more geosites.
- (f) Photo and video competition: To enter this competition, participants simply upload photos or videos taken in HK Geopark to social media pages under the hashtag #Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark 10th Anniversary. The 100 contestants with the most "likes" will each get a souvenir, and the

winning entries will be posted in an online photo exhibition so that netizens around the world can appreciate the natural beauty of HK Geopark.

- (g) Po Pin Chau viewing platform design competition: Jointly organised with the Architectural Services Department, this competition will invite professionals related to building industry to design a viewing platform in Sai Kung East Country Park near Fa Shan overlooking Po Pin Chau, and associated hiking facilities. The winner may be invited to take part in the implementation and construction of the viewing platform and associated facilities.

4. New Facilities

4.1 As we celebrate our 10th anniversary, two new facilities will be opened. These latest fruits of the "Same Roots • Same Origins" project will enhance the visitor experience and promote local historical impressions and cultural heritage to promote the sustainable development of the geopark communities. The two new facilities are as follows:

- (a) Kat O Heritage Trail: This route will link more than 20 nature, history and culture attractions and present the bustling Kat O of decades past with small interpretation panels and an audio guide.
- (b) The renovated Lai Chi Wo Geoheritage Centre: The redesigned exhibitions will present the Hakka walled village of Lai Chi Wo and slices of life in the past.

5. Publicity and Promotion

5.1 To promote HK Geopark and its new facilities and to encourage the public to join our celebrations, the AFCD is producing a series of videos to present HK Geopark's unique geology, natural attractions and heritage, as well as tour routes. We will also launch a completely revamped geopark website, alongside a beautiful photo album. The AFCD will promote geopark events and new facilities through multiple channels, including media interviews, event websites, social media, banners and posters, and the co-organisers will disseminate event information through their individual communication channels.

6. Advice Sought

6.1 Board members are invited to comment on the 10th anniversary celebration programme of Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
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