

ZONTA Club of Hong Kong 2018-20 2nd General Meeting

Speech by Ir Alfred Sit JP, Director of Electrical & Mechanical Services

President Yeh, Zontians, it is my honor this evening to address some of the most distinguished women in Hong Kong. Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Zonta International on approaching its 100th anniversary. For almost a century, Zonta's mission is to strive for gender equality and to realize the full potential of women in serving the community. Today, what used to be Zonta's dream has become REALITY! Take for example, just this past year, Hong Kong saw its first female Chief Executive assume office to lead Hong Kong towards a brighter future. In EMSD too, we just had our very first female Chief Engineer taking up a directorate post. The achievements that Zonta has made throughout the years is evident in all walks of life and resonate with many people in Hong Kong.

Tonight is Halloween, an evening when kids and teenagers go "trick-or-treating" and have fun. Halloween is about dressing up in ghostly outfits and sharing horror stories in a spirit of fun. However, Halloween may also be an opportunity for us to predict the future, in a festive ambience rich with the imagined presence of spiritual beings. When it comes to "trick or treat", since I am definitely too old for candy treats, I am going to "trick" you with a horror story. I am going to tell you this is what Hong Kong will look like in 2025.

In 2025, the sea-level of Hong Kong will rise so high that most of our roads will be submerged, as a result of glacier melting under ever-rising global temperature. By then, the G/F of this building (Landmark) will be covered in water. Take a look at this next photo.

This photo captures the catastrophic effects of a super typhoon on Hong Kong. The sea-level rises to flood most of our lowland areas. In fact, we need not look so far as 2025. Director of the Hong Kong Observatory said should Super Typhoon Mangkhut directly struck Hong Kong, the sea-level of Tolo Harbour would have risen by 7 meters and the result would have been catastrophic. We were lucky this time. Climate change is already happening and it is affecting us even now. This all have to do with the way we have been living, our use of electricity, and our contribution to global warming. We are the catalyst of climate change! We are our own worst enemy! To

tackle the problem, the Government has produced advertisement to increase public awareness on climate change, let us have a look at the following video.

In addition, the Government has promulgated a Climate Action Plan. Climate change did not start today. It started many years back but many people were in denial mode and refused to acknowledge its impact, until recently when the entire world witnessed the increasing severity of super storms on different continents. Fortunately, the Government began tackling the problem over 20 years ago. Policies, schemes and guidelines were promulgated with a view to changing our way of living.

Through these efforts and after two decades of hard work, Hong Kong's energy use intensity is now amongst the lowest of all APEC economies. In the past 10 years alone, Hong Kong has reduced its energy intensity by more than 26%. Being number one and with a reduction of 26% sounds like a great achievement; but sadly, it is still not enough. Our target is to reduce our energy intensity by another 40% by 2025, or else my prophecy of a flooded Hong Kong will become reality. We need your help! Where should we start?

You may be aware that Hong Kong is a metropolitan city in which 70% of our total contribution to global warming comes from the use of electricity. 90% of such use comes from within buildings. So here is what you can do to help.

Let's take a typical family as an example. A family consisting of Mom and Dad, Grandmom and Grandfather and a young kid. How many of us have conventional lighting switch to turn on/off your lights at home? I would guess almost 90% of us do. With the advancement of technology, we now have a better solution. A single home automation dashboard is now able to control almost every home appliance. You can now remotely turn off lighting and other electrical appliances via devices like your mobile phone even when you are not at home, thus saving energy. You would also be able to retrieve data on electricity consumption at your home and know how you are doing compared with your friends and neighbours.

Speaking of lighting, have you converted all the conventional lightbulbs at your office and home to LED ones? Switching to LED lightbulbs is fast and easy, and is the smart thing to do. LED could save up to 50% of your electricity usage. Please change to LED if you have not yet done so.

Another way to help is to make the best use of our energy efficiency labelling system. Hong Kong's energy labels have been in place since 2009. As of today, energy labels cover 8 types of the most commonly found electrical appliances at home that consume the most electricity. It is important to note that an appliance with a "Grade 5" energy label rating can consume up to 43% more energy than one with a "Grade 1" energy label rating, which is the best grade. We understand that product appearance is certainly an important factor in our purchase decision, just like choosing a shirt or a dress, but environmental impact is also an increasingly important consideration. Though I am no fashion expert, if I were to tell you that a cardigan you have chosen would cause skin rash, would you still wear it? So the next time you choose your home appliances, please also take the energy label into consideration as your choice will affect the health of our mother Earth.

Also on product design and appearance, engineers and architects over the world have been working with designers to integrate energy-saving features into a building without compromising its aesthetics and outlook. Technology advancements have made it possible that a clear pane of glass could collect solar energy from the sun without us even noticing it. The skylight of your house or apartment block could become a mini-power plant. Recently, our electricity supply companies in Hong Kong have launched the new "feed-in" tariff scheme which allows owners of properties with rooftop solar energy systems to sell electricity back to their power grids at a rate of \$3 to \$5 dollars per unit, a very attractive rate. What's better than doing our mother Earth a favor while earning some cash on the side?

Hong Kong is a fast-paced, hard-working city and most people probably feel exhausted after work when they get home. How many times have we fallen asleep in the couch, watching our favorite TV show, with all our lightings switched-on the entire night, while the bedroom lights are on all that time? Not only is it not good for our health, it is also not good for energy conservation. We need simply replace our light switch with one integrated with an occupancy sensor, and such energy wastage will never happen again.

Out of entrenched habits, we often waste energy without realizing it. People don't seem to realise that printers, computer monitors and DVD players all consume electricity even when switched to "stand-by" mode. This is call "stand-by" power and

takes up to as much as 3% of our home energy consumption. To shave-off this wasted standby power, just unplug the appliance from the power socket. However, this sounds like a tedious task and most people would not bother. One solution is to use an “intelligent adaptor” so that the stand-by power on all peripheral devices would be automatically turned off to save energy. For instance, when your computer is switched off, the intelligent adaptor would automatically cut the power supply to your monitor and printer. A simple conversion of your home conventional power bar to an “intelligent adaptor” will do the trick.

Earlier this month, the United Nation issued its latest report on climate change. The report is disturbing as climate change is reported to be happening at a much faster rate than most scientists had anticipated. The estimated damage to the Earth would come at a staggering cost of HK\$400 trillion dollars. Worst yet, our life and our future generations would be significantly affected. If we don't change our way of living, the human species will soon be forced into survival mode. As responsible person, we all strive to give our future generations the best education and upbringing, so that they can become successful lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs or excel in other careers. But are we doing enough to give them a better world and a sustainable environment in which to succeed? I would venture to suggest that, out of the many different answers we might have for this question, one small thing we can all do is to help save the world by saving energy. The energy saving tips that I just outlined are simple things that you and I could do immediately to help mother Earth. So, let us join hands towards this energy saving journey to make a difference. A song written and composed by Michael Jackson titled “Heal the world” embrace the concept of “betterment for all”. The lyrics are particular meaningful and I would like to end my speech by sharing with you a special video. Heal the world starts now! Thank you.

31 October 2018