

For Immediate Release

## **HKRITA continues driving sustainability of the textile and fashion industry with international collaboration and award-winning innovations**

**30 April 2019** – The Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA) today announced its upcoming collaboration strategy in further driving towards continued innovation and sustainability of the textile and fashion industry. HKRITA recently led a delegation comprising representatives of the textiles and fashion industry, international NGOs and the academic sector to meet with the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) to enhance the exchange of ideas to achieve the sustainable development goals for the textiles and fashion Industry, and to introduce its pioneering textile technologies which have won a number of prestigious international and local awards. These include three gold medals in the 47th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva and the Red Dot Award Product Design 2019, demonstrating its sustained efforts in supporting technological advancement.

**Mr Nicholas W Yang, GBS, JP, Secretary for Innovation and Technology, HKSAR Government**, attended today’s press conference to pledge his support for local R&D and sustainable development in the textile and fashion industry. Mr Yang said that the six awarded projects of HKRITA in Geneva this year had secured over \$40 million funding support from the Innovation and Technology Fund. He added, “Traditional industries need to embrace innovation and technology for breakthrough in quality. Textile industry also grows with more technologies, which can raise its competitiveness and open up new frontier. The Government will continue to support local R&D projects in this regard.”

**Mr Edwin Keh, Chief Executive Officer of The Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel**, said in his welcome speech, “HKRITA, as a recognised pioneer in the textile and fashion industry, is committed to driving the industry’s sustainable development through innovation and collaboration. Bringing together efforts from local as well as global R&D and industry partners, we have recently engaged in an international dialogue with the UN Environment to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With this successful start in facilitating an extensive effort around the world, we believe the textiles and fashion industry will transform into a fully sustainable industry with the aid of our innovative award-winning technologies.”

### **International Collaboration toward achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

HKRITA held a fruitful first meeting with the UN Environment in mid-April which aimed to encourage international discussion towards achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by bringing together an extensive effort connecting industry and the NGO, academic sectors. At the meeting, concerns about the pursuit of SDGs were widely discussed. Leading international NGOs shared their current initiatives to facilitate a sustainable growth of the industry by building a circular economy. The academic sector also shared their experiences on nurturing talent to drive global sustainable development. Despite the challenge in balancing economic and environmental sustainability, the discussion came to a conclusion that it is crucial for the industry to develop a series of sustainable practices in building long-term values with their stakeholders. Looking forward, HKRITA will take a proactive role in connecting various parties to further exchange cases and best practices, and to promote engagement through high-level international conversations to facilitate concrete initiatives in accomplishing the SDGs in the near future.

### **A series of award-winning innovations related to sustainable technologies**

HKRITA is committed to bringing benefits to society with the aid of its award-winning innovations. In the recent 47th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva, HKRITA won three gold medals, one silver medal and two bronze medals. Among the entries, the project “Highly Efficient Far Infrared (FIR) Functional Textile” received a special prize from The National Research Council of Thailand. Earlier, one of the gold medal projects, “Garment-to-Garment recycle system (G2G) – A Mini Mill within The Mills”, a mini production line that recycles post-consumer garments into clean and wearable clothes, was also awarded the Red Dot Award Product Design 2019. Another gold medal project, “Eco-friendly Cellulosic Superabsorbent Polymer”, a biodegradable water retention solution from recycled textile wastes, opens a completely new and sustainable way of producing absorbent materials for use in growing cotton.

These successes demonstrate HKRITA’s sustained efforts and commitment in developing core technological competencies in textiles and fashion, while spearheading continuous innovations and environmental protection in order to revitalise the local industry in Hong Kong.

### **About The Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA)**

Established in 2006, HKRITA is funded by the Innovation and Technology Commission of the HKSAR Government and hosted by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. HKRITA engages in applied research to support the textile and apparel industry in order to boost its overall competitiveness, and to drive sustainable improvements and bring benefits to society. By providing one-stop services for applied research, technology transfer and commercialisation, HKRITA makes sustained efforts to promote successful projects for industry application.

## Photo captions

### Photo 1



Mr Nicholas W Yang, GBS, JP, Secretary for Innovation and Technology, HKSAR Government says that textile industry also grows with more technologies, which can raise its competitiveness and open up new frontier.

### Photo 2



Mr Edwin Keh, Chief Executive Officer of HKRITA, remarks that, “HKRITA, as a recognised pioneer in the textile and fashion industry, is committed to driving the industry’s sustainable development through innovation and collaboration.

**Photo 3**



Mr Nicholas W. Yang, GBS, JP, Secretary for Innovation and Technology of the HKSAR Government (Center), Ms Teresa YANG, Chairman of HKRITA (Right) and Mr Edwin Keh, Chief Executive Officer of HKRITA (Left), take a picture at today's press conference.

**Photo 4**



HKRITA's board of directors, researchers and project sponsors attend the press conference today.

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