

For Immediate Release

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HKRITA Innovation & Technology Symposium 2025 Navigating Change: United for a Sustainable Future

The Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA) hosted its Innovation & Technology Symposium 2025 today at the Charles K. Kao Auditorium, Hong Kong Science Park. Guided by the theme “Navigating Change: United for a Sustainable Future”, the half-day event brought together industry leaders, policymakers and innovators to explore transformative strategies that advance sustainability in the textile and apparel industry.

Ms Teresa Yang, JP, Chairman of HKRITA, underscored the urgency of responding to global challenges, “From climate change and digital disruption to evolving regulatory demands, the challenges are real—and so is our responsibility.” She reaffirmed HKRITA’s belief that “innovation is not just about invention—it’s about impact,” a principle that drives its alignment with national priorities and global sustainability agendas.

Symposium Highlights

Prof Sun Dong, JP, Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry of the HKSAR Government, says in the opening address that, “Hong Kong has long been recognised as a pivotal player in the global apparel and fashion industry. By embracing technological advancements and sustainable practices, Hong Kong can reinforce its status as both an international innovation and technology (I&T) centre and a leading fashion hub. The industry is welcome to scale the solutions offered by HKRITA, adding values to your business and bringing benefits to the environment, through multi-stakeholder partnerships and commercialisation arrangements with HKRITA. I look forward to witnessing more exciting collaborative projects in future.”

Keynote presentations from industry and academic leaders—including Dr William Fung, SBS, OBE, JP, Group Deputy Chairman of Fung Group; Mr Sunny Malhotra, Managing Director of Simple Approach Ltd; Prof Dr Dennis Jie Sun, Dean of the College of Fashion and Design at Donghua University; and Ms Lirong Sun, Head of LCA Research, Office for Social Responsibility at the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC)—offered a diverse and forward-looking perspective on critical issues. Topics ranged from shifting global trade dynamics and tariff policies to the importance of cross-sector collaboration in driving sustainable progress. Speakers emphasised how creativity can be harnessed to support circularity in fashion, and how digital transformation can enhance traceability and accountability across supply chains.

A dynamic panel discussion, moderated by Ms Angelica Leung, Head of Consumer Products at Invest Hong Kong, focused on artificial intelligence and digital tools as enablers of smarter decision-making and industry resilience. Panellists—Mr Xiaolai Luo, Chief Technology Officer of Tessellation Group; Dr Leo Pui-Wai Ma, Dean of Deloitte AI Institute (Hong Kong); and Mr Kohei Tsuji, Division Manager of the Apparel Business Incubation Division at Toray Industries (HK) Ltd—emphasised that embracing these technologies strengthens the sector’s adaptability and ensures long-term viability in a fast-evolving global market.

Open Lab Global Challenge Award Presentation

Reflecting HKRITA’s commitment to nurturing future changemakers, the symposium hosted the Open Lab Global Challenge Award Presentation, showcasing the bold ideas of university and secondary school students addressing sustainability challenges through innovative fashion concepts.

UNIVERSITY GROUP

- **Winners:** *Spray on Sock Repair* – Ethan Granat and Lila Rockwood (Western Washington University)
- **Runners-up:** *POCO: Sustainable Fashion Adventure* – Ng Wing Yan, Wong Ching Ying, Poon Wai Woon (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

SECONDARY SCHOOL GROUP

- **Winners:** *StyleCycle* – Eunice Onyiyechi Aaron-Smith, Renzo Yee, Elin Yuan and Helena Kwan (Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong)
- **Runner-up:** *Peel & Brew Fabric* – So Ching Kwan Ina (Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School)

Their innovative proposals reflected a deep commitment to circularity and climate action in fashion. Highlights are available at <https://www.openlabglobalchallenge.com/Openlab>.

Triple Honours at Just Style Excellence Awards 2025



Closing the day on a high note, HKRITA proudly received three accolades in the Just Style Excellence Awards 2025, a testament to how innovation translates into tangible outcomes:






Award Category	Project Impact
Environmental (Waste Reduction)	Recognised for its waste reduction strategy developed with Open Lab, a selective separation system for nylon recovery from textile waste, and an advanced denim wastewater treatment using adsorption and regeneration
Innovation (Waste Upcycling)	Honoured for transforming kombucha waste into bacterial cellulose fibres and leather-like alternatives, redefining possibilities in bio-based materials
Research & Development (Functional Fabrics)	Celebrated for developing eco-friendly high-performance fabrics tailored to the sporty fashion and athleisure market

Highlights of the awards are available at <https://www.just-style.com/featured-company/2025-hkrita/>

These recognitions underscore HKRITA’s mission to ensure that research-driven innovation delivers scalable, real-world impact for both the industry and the planet.

Photo

	<p>Prof Dong Sun, JP, Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry of the HKSAR Government (centre); Ms Teresa Yang, JP, Chairman of HKRITA (right); and Mr Jake Koh, CEO of HKRITA (left), officiate at the opening ceremony</p>
	<p>Dr William Fung, SBS, OBE, JP, Group Deputy Chairman of Fung Group, offers insights on navigating US tariff challenges within the textile and garment industry</p>

	<p>Mr Sunny Malhotra, Managing Director of Simple Approach Ltd, discusses how strategic partnerships can drive sustainable transformation in textiles</p>
	<p>Prof Dr Dennis Jie Sun, Dean of the College of Fashion and Design, Donghua University, explains how design fuels innovation and promotes sustainable fashion</p>
	<p>Ms Lirong Sun, Head of LCA Research, Office for Social Responsibility at CNTAC, shares progress on implementing digital product passports in China's textile and apparel sector</p>
	<p>Panel discussion: (from left) Ms Angelica Leung, Head of Consumer Products at Invest Hong Kong; Mr Xiaolai Luo, Chief Technology Officer of Tessellation Group; Dr Leo Pui-Wai Ma, Dean of Deloitte AI Institute (Hong Kong); and Mr Kohei Tsuji, Division Manager of the Apparel Business Incubation Division at Toray Industries (HK) Ltd</p>
	<p>Awardees of Open Lab Global Challenge: (from left): Miss So Ching Kwan Ina (Runner-up of Secondary School Group); Miss Helena Kwan and Miss Eunice Onyiyechi Aaron-Smith (Winners of Secondary School Group); Mr Jake Koh, Chief Executive Officer of HKRITA (a member of the judging panel); Mr Dorian Ho, fashion designer (a member of the judging panel); Mr Ethan Granat (Winner of University Group); Miss Ng Wing Yan, Miss Poon Wai Woon and Miss Wong Ching Ying (Runners-up of University Group)</p>

To download a hi-res file, please click: <http://bit.ly/4kKyMdb>

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 is hosted by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. HKRITA contributes to the competitiveness of the textile and apparel industry by providing one-stop services in applied research, technology transfer and commercialisation. HKRITA also plays a vital and expanding role in driving sustainable improvements in the industry and thus bringing benefits to society as a whole.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Ms SC Ku (Tel: (852) 2627 8112; Email: scku@hkrita.com / mediacentre@hkrita.com)