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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bringing Together Leading Scholars, Maritime Professionals, and Cultural Experts 2025 Forum for Asia-Pacific Maritime Culture Exploring Issues Surrounding Maritime Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development of the Marine Environment

Hong Kong, August 18, 2025 – The inaugural Forum for Asia-Pacific Maritime Culture (the Forum), co-hosted by the Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) and the China Maritime Museum (Shanghai), in association with the International Congress of Maritime Museums Regional Meeting, will take place from September 23 to 24 at the HKMM. This year's Forum, themed "Blue Legacy • Green Future," invites the public to join with free registration. The event will bring together over 30 speakers from 19 countries and regions. The forum aims to inspire new perspectives and greater dialogue on the urgent issues facing the Asia Pacific region's maritime heritage and marine environment, while vitalizing Hong Kong's position as a key player on the global maritime cultural stage.

The Forum is a highly anticipated event in the maritime industry, bringing leading scholars, maritime professionals, and cultural experts from around the world. This year, the Hong Kong Maritime Museum is honoured to be one of the hosts. As a unique hub where East meets West, Hong Kong provides an ideal setting for meaningful dialogue. It also plays a significant and unique role in promoting global maritime culture and sustainable development. By fostering deeper understanding and global engagement, the Forum aims to strengthen humanity's collective commitment to the stewardship of our shared maritime heritage and environment.

Six Programme Themes

The Forum features six programme themes: "The Legacy of Zheng He in a Global Context," "Preservation and Transmission of Maritime Heritage," "Tales from the Deep," "Ports and Society," "Marine Science through a Cross-Cultural Lens" and "The Mission of the Maritime Industry."

Impressive Line-up of Speakers

Keynote speakers include Ms. Kristen GREENAWAY, President, International Congress of Maritime Museums, President & CEO, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (USA), and Mr. AN Laishun, Chairman, The Asia Pacific Alliance of International Councils of Museums, Vice President, The China Museums Association, Professor, Shanghai University (China). Both speakers will share valuable insights during the keynote speeches, offering attendees international and diverse perspectives. Participants can also interact with the speakers during the forum.

Ms. Kristen GREENAWAY's distinguished service to the maritime heritage community has earned significant recognition. GREENAWAY is the first maritime museum leader to receive the National Maritime Historical Society's Distinguished Service Award, an honour previously bestowed on some of the world's most renowned mariners.

Mr. AN Laishun is a Professor and Ph.D. Supervisor at the School of Cultural Heritage and Information Management, Shanghai University, specializing in cultural heritage and museum studies with decades of scholarly leadership. He holds concurrent roles as Vice President of the Chinese Museums

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Association, Chair of the International Council of Museums Asia-Pacific Alliance (ICOM-ASPAC), and Director of the ICOM International Museum Research and Exchange Centre (ICOM-IMREC), Guest Researcher at the Palace Museum Academy, External Expert Advisor to the National Museum of China, and Chair of the Board of Zhejiang Museum of Natural History.

Global Maritime Museums — Bridges Across Oceans

One of the keynote speeches on "Global Maritime Museums: Bridges Across Oceans - The Role & Responsibilities of Global Maritime Museums" will be presented by Ms. Kristen GREENAWAY, elaborating on maritime museums as cultural bridges connecting civilizations across oceanic boundaries. Modern maritime museums have evolved to acknowledge complex histories, creating more inclusive narratives, linking global maritime communities, and addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

Many may believe that the role of maritime museums is limited to showcasing historical stories, helping the public understand complex histories such as those of slavery and immigration, and encouraging reflection on current global events. However, the role of maritime museums goes far beyond this. They are not just spaces for visitors but bridges connecting the oceans and civilizations. Through exhibitions and programmes, maritime museums actively promote environmentally conscious and international cooperation, creating deeper and more direct social impacts.

Maritime Cultural Heritage — Crucial Forces in Sustainable Development

In addition, one of the keynote speeches on "Exploring the Multiple Values and Sustainability of Maritime Cultural Heritage" will be presented by Mr. AN Laishun. He will elaborate on the significant role of maritime museums in protecting, researching, interpreting, and disseminating the multiple values of maritime cultural heritage.

The term "maritime cultural heritage" might bring to mind historical artifacts such as ancient ships and anchors for many. However, maritime cultural heritage is not confined to the past; it evolves with time, taking on new meanings. Over the past 50 years, the concept, scope, and value of cultural heritage have been continually evolved, expanding to encompass deeper significance. Today, discussions surrounding the value of maritime cultural heritage and related issues have grown increasingly rich. Maritime cultural heritage not only symbolizes history but also serves as a crucial force for sustainable development.

The inaugural Forum for Asia-Pacific Maritime Culture is not just a collision of thoughts but also a fusion of cultures. By promoting academic collaboration and public engagement, the forum aims to further strengthen the international community's commitment to the protection of maritime cultural heritage and the sustainable development of the marine environment. The HKMM will continue to play a key role in maritime culture and sustainable development with an open and inclusive approach, contributing to the shared global vision of a "Blue Legacy" and "Green Future."

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Forum Details

Dates and opening hours	23 September (Tuesday), 8:30am-5:30pm 24 September (Wednesday), 8:30am-6:00pm
Venue	Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Central Pier No. 8, Hong Kong
Website	https://www.hkmaritimemuseum.org/forum-for-asia-pacific-maritime-culture
Register	The public is welcome to register by filling the “Registration of Interest” form on the website. Kindly note that the submission of this form does not serve as confirmation of registration. We will confirm your registration by mid-August via email.

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Programme

This is a provisional programme. The final version is expected to be released in September. Please note that any changes to the programme or order will not be notified individually. Please check the website for the latest updates.

Day 1

September 23, 2025 (Tuesday)

Time	Session details
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Delegates (at the Reception Counter)
09:00 - 09:30	Opening Ceremony & Welcome Speeches
09:30 - 10:30	Keynote Speeches
10:30 - 11:00	Tea Break
11:00 - 12:30	Panel 1
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch & networking
14:00 - 15:30	Panel 2
15:30 - 16:00	Tea Break
16:00 - 17:30	Panel 3
17:30	End of Day 1

Day 2

September 24, 2025 (Wednesday)

Time	Session details
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Delegates (at the Reception Counter)
09:00 - 10:30	Panel 4
10:30 - 11:00	Tea Break
11:00 - 12:30	Panel 5
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch & networking
14:00 - 15:30	Panel 6
15:30 - 16:00	Tea Break
16:00 - 17:30	Panel 7
17:30 - 18:00	Forum Closing Summary Report and Outlook
18:00	End of Forum

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Keynote Speeches

Global Maritime Museums: Bridges Across Oceans - The Role & Responsibilities of Global Maritime Museums

- Kristen GREENAWAY (President, International Congress of Maritime Museums, President & CEO, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (USA))

Exploring the Multiple Values and Sustainability of Maritime Cultural Heritage

- AN Laishun (Chairman, The Asia Pacific Alliance of International Councils of Museums, Vice President, The China Museums Association, Professor, Shanghai University (China))

Others - Synopsis & Speakers

1) Theme: The Legacy of Zheng He in a Global Context

Zheng He is famous for leading seven extraordinary voyages in the early 1400s across the ocean to the coasts of India, east Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. His expeditions have left a significant cultural, social and political legacy that is relevant today. This panel looks at Zheng He's legacy through a variety of approaches, from his direct legacy and the surviving evidence, to the arrival of Europeans to trade with China, their use of existing trade patterns and commodities, as well as the personal relationships created during these exchanges.

Panellists:

- Benjamin ASMUSSEN (Senior Researcher, National Museum of Denmark (Denmark))
- Paul VAN DYKE (Professor Emeritus, Sun Yat-sen University (China))
- HUANG Chao (Professor, the School of Journalism and Communication, Jinan University (China))
- LI Pei Feng (Curator, Cheng Ho Cultural Museum, Melaka, Malaysia (Malaysia))
- Clifford PEREIRA (Freelance Heritage Researcher and Consultant)
- Mathias KARLSMOSE (PhD Candidate, Stockholm University (Sweden))

2) Theme: Preservation and Transmission of Maritime Heritage

This panel focuses on research that acknowledges the indigenous cultures and their maritime heritage, highlighting the evolving role of museums, communities, and cultural institutions in safeguarding intangible traditions and tangible heritage. The importance of modern-day collaboration to better understand objects of cultural significance, local trade and its legacies in Hong Kong, as well as the significance of maritime ritual with sea worship and the Nanhai God Festival. In addition, the panel session looks at approaches within China for the preservation and interpretation of cultural heritage.

Panellists:

- DING Jianxiang (Professor, School of Cultural Heritage and Information Management,

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Shanghai University (China))

- Daina FLETCHER (Senior Curator, Australian National Maritime Museum (Australia))
- WANG Fang (Head, Guangzhou Maritime Museum (China))
- WONG King-chung, Desmond (Senior Conservation Manager, The Conservancy Association (Hong Kong, China))

3) Theme: Marine Science & Sustainability

Many museums are beginning to look at how their education programmes can reflect and present the challenges to decarbonise the maritime industries. Connected to this is the drive to increase ocean literacy and highlighting the importance of a sustainable approach to managing our maritime ecosystem. These speakers bring together both the marine science, industry and the role of museums in educating the public. The combination of papers is there to encourage dialogue and promote collaboration between industry and heritage institutions in order to best tell these stories to the wider public.

Panellists:

- Daryl ABARCA (Curator and Researcher, AIMS Museo Maritimo, Philippines (Philippines))
- Mavis LUO (Client Manager, CTX Special Risks (Hong Kong, China))
- NG Ka Yan, Connie (Head of Marine Discovery Centre, Hong Kong Maritime Museum (Hong Kong, China))

4) Theme: Underwater Archaeology – Case Studies

Underwater Archaeology has become a significant element to our understanding of maritime connections through trade and technological exchange. These speakers use specific shipwrecks to look at what can be learned from them across the Asia Pacific Region when analysing the Maritime Silk Road, linking Europe and Asia. It includes learning from wrecks that tell us about China in-bound and out-bound cargoes, and trade around India and Sri Lanka. An important part of this understanding is how it is presented to the public, also redefining assumptions about past Chinese dynasties and their maritime influence.

Panellist:

- WEI Jun (Professor, Department of Cultural Relics and Museology and the Institute of Science and Technology Archaeology, Fudan University (China))
- Richard GRIFFITHS (Research Fellow, International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden (The Netherlands))
- SONG Jianzhong (Director, Hainan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology (South China Sea Deep-Sea Archaeology Institute) (China))

5) Theme: Ports & Society

Most major cities can be found on the coast or rivers indicating the importance of water to their prosperity. The panel looks at four different ports from across the region and the impact on them, Jakarta, Yokohama, Ningbo, and Guangzhou. The fact Guangzhou features twice reflects its

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significance in international trade as an entrepôt with the West and its pivotal role through the export artworks that passed through it. The recent excavations from the Song and Yuan dynasties around the port of Ningbo highlights its significance as a maritime hub interconnected by land and sea. The papers consider the complex cultural synthesis between Japanese and Western cultures is explored through prints elevates the importance of this social cultural exchange, as well as how local and migrant communities have shaped Jakarta's maritime cultural identity.

Panellist:

- HUANG Haiyan (Director, Guangdong Folk Art Museum (China))
- Jenevieve KOK (Curator, Defence Collective Singapore (Singapore))
- LIU Miao (Associate Professor, School of History and Cultural Heritage, Xiamen University (China))
- ZENG Lingling (Deputy Director, Guangzhou Museum (China))

6) Theme: Global View of Underwater Archaeology

While a previous panel has focused on specific case studies to illustrate what can be learnt from wrecks, this panel takes a global view. It promotes the idea of local involvement to encourage better care for shipwrecks across the Asia Pacific region, as well as how the network of shipwrecks provides important evidence of the Maritime Silk Road. The international scope of this maritime trade is demonstrated by the combination of shipwrecks, port histories and evidence of trade goods that help our understanding of historical maritime commerce and cross-cultural interaction through the lens of archaeological discovery.

- XIN Lixue (Director, China (Hainan) South China Sea Museum (China))
- Sarah WARD (Professor, Maritime Archaeology and Underwater Cultural Heritage, Dalian Maritime University (China))
- JIANG Bo (Professor, Institute of Cultural Heritage, Shandong University (China))

7) Theme: Cross-Cultural Perspectives: Museum Education

This panel focuses on the evolving role of maritime museums in curatorial, collection and education. It explores how maritime museums across the Asia Pacific and beyond are reimagining their missions to engage diverse audiences, promote sustainability, and foster cross-cultural understanding. The session highlights innovative approaches to exhibition and collection, education, community outreach, and international partnerships, reinforcing the maritime museum's role in connecting history and future, as well as the civilisations across oceanic boundaries, addressing twenty-first century maritime challenges.

Panellist:

- LEE Hyoung-gi (Chief Curator and Head of the Curatorial and Research Headquarters, Incheon National Maritime Museum (South Korea))
- Andreia CONCEIÇÃO (Director, Sesimbra Maritime Museum (Portugal))
- Richard WESLEY (Assistant Director (Fleet and Collections), Australian National Maritime Museum (Australia))

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- LU Wei (Deputy Director, China Maritime Museum (China))

Press images are available for download [here](#).



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NOTES TO EDITOR

About the Hong Kong Maritime Museum

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) is an independent, non-profit registered charity founded by members of the Hong Kong shipping industry, supported by the business community, individuals and the Hong Kong SAR Government. As a cultural institution, we are dedicated to showcasing and preserving the maritime heritage and contemporary marine environment of Hong Kong and the South China Sea. Rooted in China, but looking to the world, we aim to inspire people's appreciation of their relationship with the sea. By connecting East and West, maritime cultural heritage and sustainable ocean development, we delve into the profound ties between people and the sea. Through our rich exhibitions and educational programs, we hope to cultivate public passion and respect for maritime culture and promote the sustainable development of the marine environment.

For more information, visit www.hkmaritimemuseum.org.

Ticketing information

Adults: HK\$30 Seniors (aged 60 or above), full-time students (with valid ID), children (under 18) and people with disabilities (accompanied by a carer): HK\$15

*Discounts are available for group visits of 10 or more.

For the latest update on ticketing, opening hours and social distancing information, please visit www.hkmaritimemuseum.org

Venue

Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Central Pier 8

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For media enquiries, please contact:

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