Defining the Road to Zero Carbon Prosperity

An International Conference

October 26-28th, 2026

No.1 Du Xue Rd, Nansha District, Guangzhou

Guangdong, China

1. Overview and Background

In April 2026, at the first International Conference on the Transition Away from Fossil Fuels (TAFF) held in Santa Marta, Colombia, the team from The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) [HKUST(GZ)] introduced the concept of Zero Carbon Prosperity. The concept was well received by participants and was subsequently reflected in several conference outcome documents.

The positive response highlighted a growing recognition that the global transition away from fossil fuels requires a new development paradigm to moves international climate governance beyond the zero-sum logic of fossil fuel dependence toward a model of renewable energy–driven zero carbon prosperity. Building on the discussions in Santa Marta and subsequent consultations with international partners, HKUST(GZ) proposes to host the International Conference on Zero Carbon Prosperity in late October 2026. The conference will bring together leading scholars, policymakers, industry representatives, and practitioners from around the world to advance the conceptual framework of Zero Carbon Prosperity, exchange experiences on policy and technological innovation, and explore pathways for international cooperation. The objective is to help translate Zero Carbon Prosperity from an emerging concept into practical action and from academic dialogue into sustained international collaboration.

The Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area is home to some of China's most innovative examples of green and low-carbon development, including world-leading renewable energy industries, electric mobility, and zero carbon demonstration projects. To complement the conference discussions, the program will include technical site visits, providing participants with firsthand insights into China's experience in zero carbon transformation and the practical implementation of zero carbon technologies and development models.

2. Workstream Themes and Final Outputs

The UNFCCC process has repeatedly demonstrated the limitations of the existing climate governance framework in overcoming global dependence on fossil fuels. The Santa Marta Process emerged in response to the striking absence of fossil fuel transition as a central topic within the UNFCCC negotiations, while aligning closely with the urgency highlighted by the science community. At the same time, an

exclusively ‘anti–fossil fuel’ narrative has proven politically difficult for many governments to embrace. A successful transition therefore requires not only a compelling ‘No to Fossil Fuels’, but also a ‘Yes to Zero Carbon Prosperity’, reflecting the positive and forward-looking vision that emphasizes development opportunities, economic growth, and human well-being.

Building on the momentum of the Santa Marta Process, this workshop will place Zero Carbon Prosperity at the center of international dialogue. It aims to strengthen international collaboration on issues including global energy transition, green economic development, industrial transformation, and climate governance. The workshop seeks to provide both intellectual foundations and practical policy support for the Santa Marta Process.

At Santa Marta, the Zero Carbon Prosperity Workstream develop an initial definition of Collective Prosperity. The Guangzhou Conference seeks to deepen, broaden and operationalize this concept through dialogue across disciplines, cultures, and knowledge systems, exploring how Zero Carbon Prosperity can evolve into a globally resonant vision for post-fossil development.

We welcome relevant workstream organizer and participants to join and bring the conversation from the Santa Marta Conference to Guangzhou:

- Public Health
- Methane
- Central Banking
- Bringing Zero Carbon Prosperity to Life
- Maritime and Aviation Decarbonization
- Zero Carbon Prosperity Theory and Practice
- Food Security and Rural Development
- Just Transition and Economic Diversification
- Earth Resilience System
- Cooperation on Critical Minerals Value Chains

Together, these workstreams will contribute to the conceptual development of Zero Carbon Prosperity by providing a clear and widely applicable definition and establishing measurable standards to assess progress. Building on the consensus generated through the conference, we expect to deliver a final output, in form of a Guangzhou Declaration or a Synthesis Report. This document will serve as a significant contribution to the Santa Marta Process and provide substantive inputs to COP31 and subsequent TAFF conferences, helping to translate the vision of Zero Carbon Prosperity into an actionable framework for international cooperation and national action plans.

3. Agenda

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Arrival and Check-in

Sunday-Monday, October 25-26th Morning</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Day 1: Monday, October 26th Afternoon

Location: C2-102</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">14:30 – 14:45</td><td>Opening Remark</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lionel M. NI,
President, HKUST-GZ

Dahe QIN
Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Former Chief of China Meteorological Administration

Moderated by
Ye QI</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">14:45 – 15:50</td><td>Keynote Speech</td></tr>
<tr><td>Jiahua PAN
Executive Director of Center for Global Climate Strategies, HKUST-GZ

Pushpam KUMAR
The Chief of the Programme Management Unit, UNEP

Changwen ZHAO
Former Deputy Director of Center for International Knowledge on Development

Moderated by
Junfeng LI</td></tr>
<tr><td>15:50 - 16:05</td><td>Tea Break</td></tr>
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16:05 - 17:35	**"South–North–South" Roundtable Dialogue** **Panel Discussion 1：Zero Carbon Prosperity: Path and Future (45 mins)** Yalin LEI, Zack KING, Representatives from the Global South Moderator: Ying FAN **Panel Discussion 2: Just Transitions (45 mins)** Wei WU，Hina WEST，Representatives from the Global South Moderated by Ji ZOU
17:35 – 19:00	**Welcome Dinner**
Day 2: Tuesday, October 27th	
7:00 – 9:00	**Breakfast and Registration**
9:00 – 10:30	Parallel Workstream Sessions
10:30 – 10:45	**Tea Break**
10:45 – 12:00	Parallel Workstream Sessions
12:00 – 14:30	**Working Lunch**
14:30 – 15:30	Parallel Workstream Sessions
15:30 – 15:45	**Tea Break**
15:45 - 17:30	Cross-cutting Topics Exchange Section

Day 3: Wednesday, October 28th	
8:30 – 8:50	**Photo with all participants** At the Red Bird Central Plaza
9:00 – 10:30	**Closing Plenary** Location: C2-102 Moderated by Kjell KÜHNE
10:30 – 10:45	**Tea break**
10:45 – 11:45	**Zero Carbon Prosperity and COP 31** (Location: C2-102) By: Janos PASZTOR **Panel Discussion:** Lei YANG, Fatima DENTON、Xiaoli ZHAO, Zhongxiang ZHANG, Zhen SUN Moderated by Zhaoli JIANG
11:45 - 12:00	Closing Remark
12:00 – 13:30	**Lunch**
13:30 – 17:00	**Field Trip and Site Visit** Gathering at the Red Bird Central Plaza