

# **Defining the Road to Zero Carbon Prosperity**

## **An International Conference**

October 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2026

No.1 Du Xue Rd, Nansha District, Guangzhou

Guangdong, China

[Event Registration](#) (still open for virtual participation)

### **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 move 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 Banks
- Transformative Multilateralism
- Maritime and Aviation Decarbonization
- Zero Carbon Prosperity Theory and Practice
- Food Security and Rural Development
- Just Transition and Economic Diversification
- Earth Resilience Systems Lab
- 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. Conference Organization and Potential participants & partners**

The conference is expected to gather approximately 150 participants, including around 95 overseas (capped at 100) and about 50 Chinese domestics from universities, research institutes, industries and government agencies.

In line with the organizational arrangement of the Santa Marta Conference, potential participants and partners include:

- Relevant workstream participants from Santa Marta
- Relevant academic community:
  - Planetary health experts
  - Ecological civilization scholars
  - Energy transition scholars
  - Development economists and wellbeing scholars
- Other stakeholders
  - Indigenous knowledge holders
  - Systems thinkers
  - Foundations and philanthropy
  - International organizations
  - NGOs
  - Policymakers

For successful organization of the conference, HKUST-GZ would like to invite international partners to join hands as co-host and/or partners of the conference. Thus far, some institutions have expressed interest in co-hosting the conference, including LINGO, George Mason University, The Earth Resilience Institute, iGDP, Tongji University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, among others.

We welcome additional co-organizers, cooperation partners or thematic session organizers, to jointly promote the development of the international cooperation network for Zero Carbon Prosperity.

#### **4. Tentative Agenda**

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Day 1: Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup></b><br><b>Arrival and Check-in</b><br><b>Welcoming Lunch at 12:00 on Campus</b> |                       |
| <b>14:30-14:40</b>                                                                                                        | <b>Opening Remark</b> |
| 14:40 – 15:50                                                                                                             | Keynote Speeches      |

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|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>15:50 – 16:05</b>                             | <b>Tea Break</b>                                                    |
| 16:05 – 17:30                                    | “South–North–South” Roundtable Dialogue with Global South Ministers |
| <b>Day 2: Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup></b>   |                                                                     |
| <b>7:00 – 9:00</b>                               | <b>Breakfast and Registration</b>                                   |
| 9:00 – 10:30                                     | Parallel Workstream Sessions (TBC)                                  |
| <b>10:30 – 10:45</b>                             | <b>Tea Break</b>                                                    |
| 10:45 – 12:00                                    | Parallel Workstream Sessions (TBC)                                  |
| <b>12:00 – 14:30</b>                             | <b>Working Lunch</b>                                                |
| 14:30 – 17:30                                    | Parallel Workstream Sessions (TBC)                                  |
| <b>Day 3: Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup></b> |                                                                     |
| 8:30 – 8:50                                      | <b>Photo with all participants</b><br>At the Red Bird Central Plaza |
| 9:00 – 10:30                                     | Parallel Workstream Sessions (TBC)                                  |
| <b>10:30 – 10:45</b>                             | <b>Tea break</b>                                                    |
| 10:45 – 12:00                                    | Closing Remark (Lecture Hall A): Open Discussion & Next Steps       |
| <b>12:00 – 13:30</b>                             | <b>Lunch</b>                                                        |

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| 13:30 – 17:00 | <b>Field Trip and Site Visit (TBC)</b><br>Gathering at the Red Bird Central Plaza |
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