

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Asia Society Hong Kong Center Presents Panel Discussion-
Hong Kong, London, New York: How Resilient Cities Minimize Disruption,
Recover and Adapt**

(Hong Kong, May 30, 2014) Creating resilient and sustainable cities is a widely investigated topic around the globe as natural disasters including weather, health and seismic events have caused US\$1.7 trillion in damages worldwide between 2000 and 2012. Studies show that only the most resilient cities capable of adapting continually to changing conditions will remain economically competitive and attractive for business growth. As an institution committed to providing insights to address present challenges and create a shared future, Asia Society Hong Kong Center hosted **Hong Kong, London, New York: How Resilient Cities Minimize Disruption, Recover and Adapt**, a panel discussion that provided a global perspective on building a resilient city in the face of such complex and constantly changing risks using the three metropolises as examples.

The program sponsored by Siemens, attracted over 100 business leaders, professionals and academics in the region across different sectors. It followed the track of the Asia Society Pacific Cities Sustainability Initiative Forum held previously in Hong Kong in February 2013 and Manila in March 2014.

Among the panelists at today's event were Robert Lane, Senior Fellow for Urban Design at the Regional Planning Association of America; Christine Loh, Under Secretary for the Environment with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; and Thomas Tang, Director for Sustainability at AECOM Asia. The panelists discussed how New York, Hong Kong and London prepare themselves against the risks brought by natural disasters, and explored the key factors in building a resilient city to maintain social well-being and economic vitality. The discussion was moderated by J. Robert Gibson, Adjunct Professor at the School of Energy and the Environment and the Sustainability Facilitator for City University of Hong Kong.

Introducing the program, S. Alice Mong, Executive Director, Asia Society Hong Kong Center, said, "Building a resilient city is a global concern and as a regional hub and a major urban center in the Asia-Pacific, Hong Kong has a responsibility to foster the development of more sustainable and livable cities. In Hong Kong, we have witnessed extreme weather problems in recent months – heavy rains, floods, hailstones - that could, if we were not a more sustainable city, damaged the city's infrastructure, economy and livability. "

Eric Chong, President & CEO of Siemens Limited, who spoke at the opening of the program, "As a global powerhouse in electrical engineering, Siemens is keen on driving sustainable development in cities and supported this event as part of our annual "Sustainability Week" program. Resilience in cities is of great importance as it enables cities to be economically competitive. In this respect, we feel that intelligent technology is a key enabler. Cities need to

plan, design, build and manage essential infrastructure such as electric grids, transportation systems, buildings and water management systems so that they can minimize disruption and recover under extreme weather situation.”

To show how cities can better protect themselves against natural disasters and extreme weather conditions, Robert Lane of the Regional Planning Association of America, discussed a study published in 2013 - Toolkit for Resilient Cities - with a detailed case study on New York City. Results showed that technology was a key component for resilient cities. It was suggested that cities should integrate resilience into all aspects of their planning and normal investment and maintenance cycles. This would reduce potential damage, enhance productivity, create a safe place to live and minimize monetary loss. Initial calculations based on the City's power grid show that, without protective measures, the repair costs of natural disasters such as Superstorm Sandy could reach up to US\$3 billion over the next 20 years. However, investing this same amount in measures to protect against wind and floods and in technologies that make power grids more robust, flexible and smarter can actually reduce damage loss by up to US\$2 billion and also generate efficiency gains of about US\$4 billion due to enhanced grid availability, stability and energy efficiency.

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Program Sponsor:



About the Panelists

J. Robert Gibson is Adjunct Professor at the School of Energy and the Environment and the Sustainability Facilitator for City University of Hong Kong's campus. His main focus area is the international cooperation on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions which is overseen by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and attended its meetings in Copenhagen, Cancun and Durban. From 2007 to 2010 he was Director Sustainable Development for John Swire & Sons (HK) Ltd with a focus on climate change issues. He received his MA from Oxford University. (Moderator)

Robert Lane is Senior Fellow for Urban Design at the Regional Planning Association of America. An architect and urban planner, he directs their regional design program, improving the metropolitan landscape through research and place-based planning and design interventions. Mr Lane focuses on the relationship between transit, land use and urban design. Projects include the Newark Vision Plan and the Civic Alliance community design workshop for the re-building of Lower Manhattan after the 9/11 attacks. Mr Lane was previously an associate at Kohn Pedersen Fox Architects. He graduated from Cornell University and Columbia University.

Christine Loh is Under Secretary for the Environment with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Ms Loh was previously Chief Executive Officer of the non-profit public policy think tank Civic Exchange until she stepped down in 2012. Prior to founding Civic Exchange in 2000, Ms Loh spent nearly a decade as a politician and member of the Legislative Council. She has founded or served on boards of a wide range of non-governmental organizations on issues including environmental protection, urban planning and design, and equal opportunity. Ms Loh graduated from the University of Hull, UK, and the City University of Hong Kong.

Thomas Tang is the Director for Sustainability at AECOM Asia. He has 20 years of experience in environmental management and sustainability assessments specializing in climate strategy, stakeholder engagement and low carbon infrastructure design. He is responsible for providing corporate and client sustainability services to the Greater China, South and South East Asia regions in support of planning, water and urban design, transportation, energy and environmental services. He holds a doctorate in chemistry and an MBA.

About Asia Society

Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd in New York, The Asia Society is a leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context. Across the fields of arts, business, culture, education, and policy, The Asia Society provides insight, generates ideas, and promotes collaboration to address present challenges and create a shared future.

About Asia Society Hong Kong Center

As an affiliate of the Asia Society global network with 11 centers, Asia Society Hong Kong Center was established in 1990 by a group of Hong Kong community leaders, led by the late Sir Q.W. Lee, the honorary chairman of Hang Seng Bank. In February 2012, the Hong Kong Center established its new permanent home in Admiralty, Hong Kong at the Old Victoria Barracks, Former Explosives Magazine site steeped in history, cultural significance and natural beauty and offers a broader variety of programs in the form of lectures, performances, film screenings and exhibitions to the community.

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About Siemens

Siemens AG (Berlin and Munich) is a global powerhouse in electronics and electrical engineering, operating in the fields of industry, energy and healthcare as well as providing infrastructure solutions, primarily for cities and metropolitan areas. For over 165 years, Siemens has stood for technological excellence, innovation, quality, reliability and internationality. The company is one of the world's largest providers of environmental technologies. In fiscal year 2013, around 43 percent of its total revenue stems from green products and solutions.

In 1911, Siemens opened a sales office in Hong Kong. Since then, the company is committed to leveraging its international expertise for the region's sustainable development. Siemens Ltd. has been providing integrated solutions for infrastructure development projects in Hong Kong and Macau, including power substations for CLP Power in Hong Kong and CEM in Macau; signalling, main control and fixed communication systems for Shatin Central Link railway and total building solutions for City of Dreams in Macau. Siemens Ltd. was ranked top ideal employer in Engineering & Manufacturing category among engineering students by Universum in 2014.

More information is available at www.siemens.com.hk.

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