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HK Set to Lead Information Services Innovations

"Hong Kong is set to play an increasingly important role in the development of global optical fibre and wireless communication," said Prof Kao, Vice-Chancellor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Steering Committee Chairman of the Tenth International Conference on Integrated Optics and Optical Fibre Communication, which begins today at the Hong Kong Convocation and Exhibition Centre.

"Optical fibre and wireless communication in Hong Kong has been progressing rapidly, making Hong Kong an important centre for developing new telecommunications and information-related services," he continued.

"The global gathering of top experts in this state-of-the-art technology of optical fibres for the first time in Hong Kong is a clear demonstration of the growing importance of the territory and the Asia Pacific region in such developments," said Prof Kao.

According to Prof Kao, the pioneer in optical fibre for communications, Hong Kong has the highest density of fibre cables in the world. Every day it handles more international and local calls, data and video transmission on fibre than many other places in the world.

"The territory's highly developed communication infrastructure has stimulated the growth of a myriad of information services," said Prof Kao. These include fixed and mobile networks offering an array of phone and data services; private networks providing information services for the business sectors; electronic data interchange (EDI) which will be introduced to Hong Kong next year; and many information vending services which are emerging on the local area networks inter-connected with the Internet.

"The fibre technology has reached its maturity, with transmission capacity almost infinite and cost nearing zero, which make it the basic element for our future telecommunications," Prof Kao said.

"The installation rate of the global fibre network is at tens of thousands of kilometres per day, and it is poised to extend to our offices and to everybody's doorway. This will change drastically the way we live and work," he added.

First appeared in the 1960s, the optical fibre technology transmits information signals at the speed of light through hair-thin fibres. It now forms the backbone for all the basic as well as innovative and futuristic information services - including telephone, facsimile, videophone as well as television.

Note to Editors:

Photos to be distributed by hand. For press enquiries, please contact Mrs Shirley Kwok of CUHK's Information & PR Office at 2609-8897 or 1168-822 A/C 6633.