



Press Release

For Immediate Release

## **2019 Integral Conversation accelerating action for inclusive growth and climate resilience**

***Leaders and experts gathered in Guilin to share insights on  
ways to magnify the impact of the Sustainable Development Goals***

Hong Kong, November 9, 2019 – Prominent leaders in business and academia gathered in Guilin, China to exchange insights at the 2019 Integral Conversation. This year's conference sought to call for greater global collective action to advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

The sixth Integral Conversation was convened between November 7 and 9 under the theme of "Sustainable Development Goals: An Inflection Point – Accelerating Action For People, Planet and Prosperity". Hundreds of international business leaders, influential scholars, distinguished policymakers and influencers had thought-provoking discussions on ideas and ways to magnify the impact of SDG 8 - decent work and economic growth, and SDG 12 - responsible consumption and production.

At the welcome dinner on Thursday, Dee Poon, Managing Director of Brands and Distribution of Esquel Group, highlighted this year's conference as an especially exciting one, as Integral's manufacturing facilities have finally been open and in operation. The dinner was attended by the Executive Vice Mayor of Guilin Xiaowu Zhang. It was followed by a fireside chat with Guymo Wong, Vice President and General Manager (RLP China) of Ronald Lu & Partners, the mastermind behind the design and construction of Integral. Wong highlighted that the essence of architecture is to connect with people and bring joy to users, and expressed hope that this project could serve as a role model for sustainable manufacturing in the future.

Teresa Yang, Vice Chairman of Esquel Group, kicked off the main conference on Friday by explaining why SDG 8 and 12 are the focal points for this year's discussions. "These two goals offer the biggest opportunities for corporations to make a difference. Chasing profit should not be the only objective for enterprises. We should be held accountable to a sustainable future," Yang said.

Hong Zhong, Vice Mayor of the Guilin Municipal Government, endorsed the continuous efforts of Integral Conversation in bringing together insights and experiences from an international group of experts and thought-leaders.

Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, Former Minister of International Trade and Industry of Malaysia, delivered the Keynote Speech, in which she stressed that every individual shares the responsibility to achieve a sustainable future. "As joint custodians of this global village, sustainability is a goal for all of us. It is an all-encompassing concept that extends beyond environmental conservation to include values such as equality, inclusivity and diversity," she said.

### **In-depth dialogs**

Esquel Group, a leading global textile and apparel manufacturer, launched the first Integral Conversation in 2014 and the conference has now entered its sixth year. A platform dedicated

to exploring new and viable social and environmental practices, the Integral Conversation continues to facilitate the exchange of ideas and insights related to sustainability, manufacturing and innovation.

- Hau Lee, Professor of the Stanford Graduate School of Business and Chairman of the Esquel Sustainability Council, hosted the panel on “**Role of Corporations – Inclusive Economic Growth to Accelerate Impact**”. The panel was joined by Angela Chan, Managing Director & President of Worldwide of CHARGEURS \* PCC Fashion Technologies, a Division of Chargeurs Group; Hans Michael Jebsen, Chairman of Jebsen Group; and Xudong Yin, President APMA Region (Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa) of Novartis Pharmaceuticals. The panel discussed the role of corporate leaders in pushing forward the global agenda of quality employment and inclusive economic growth. Jebsen emphasized that sustainability is rooted in individual mindsets rather than measurable and tangible things. Chan said: “Fashion is not just about producing pretty things, but rather, creating things with a purpose.” Yin talked about Novartis’ key pillars in approaching sustainability as a corporation: through the lenses of the environment and public health.
- The panel on “**Sustainable Development Goals – The Way Forward**” was moderated by Janet Pau, Program Director of the Asia Business Council. Speakers delved into the challenges of the current SDG framework, and identified ways to achieve a better and more sustainable future. Nannan Lundin, Counsellor and Head of Section of Science and Innovation of the Embassy of Sweden in Beijing, said while progress has not been smooth, a transformative innovation agenda is in place to make Sweden one of the world’s first fossil-free welfare states, as well as a global leader in innovation and sustainable industry. She was joined by Jianyu Zhang, Vice President of the Environmental Defense Fund, who called for a new pricing mechanism in every country and corporation to stimulate human ingenuity in discovering sustainability solutions. Zhirong Hao, Head of the Division of Outreach and Cooperation of the China Center for International Knowledge on Development, gave an overview of the strategies employed by the Chinese Government in accelerating sustainable development.
- At the luncheon session, David Wei, Chairman & Founding Partner of Vision Knight Capital, talked about the future of the Chinese economy, touching on the changing lifestyles, mindset and consumption pattern of the millennial generation, as well as the differences between Chinese and American technological development.
- The panel on “**Closing the Loop – Responsible Consumption and Production**” was hosted by Toby Usnik, Author of *The Caring Economy* and Founder and Principal of PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT (π). The dynamic session revolved around innovation, and how partnerships can ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Usnik was joined by Anurag Bajpayee, Co-founder and CEO of Gradiant Corporation; Cyrus Wadia, Former Nike Vice President of Sustainability and White House Assistant Director of Clean Energy; and Francois Souchet, Lead of Make Fashion Circular at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. The session examined a range of thought-provoking topics, including empowering customers to vote with their dollars, the scalability of sustainable manufacturing solutions, the role technology plays in sustainability and the possibility of open knowledge exchange within industries.

The “Business in Action” session unveiled Esquel’s leading participation the Initiative for Sustainable Development Actions from Businesses, a commitment signed by 16 prominent mainland and overseas enterprises at the first Sustainable Development Forum in Beijing last month. Esquel Group, together with Alibaba, China Three Gorges Corporation and Yili Group were the four enterprises that took the lead in this collective declaration to push forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

During the session, Marjorie Yang, Chairman of Esquel Group, called upon business leaders to take action in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She announced: “We are in full support of this commitment, which is why Integral will be defined as a Sustainable Development Garden. We hope that the Integral Conversation will continue to flourish as a platform, and we will use it as an opportunity for us to provide updates of our work on the SDGs every year.”

Songtao Bai, Deputy Party Secretary of Guilin Municipal Committee, noted that Guilin has been stepping up efforts to promote the development of the Innovative Demonstration Zone for the National Sustainable Development Agenda. He extended appreciation to Esquel Group and Marjorie Yang’s solid support for this cause. He further urged organizations, enterprises and academia to proactively participate in the process.

In the closing remarks, John Cheh, Vice Chairman & CEO of Esquel Group, said the positioning of Integral as Sustainable Development Garden - a fine coincidence in initials with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), demonstrates Esquel’s commitment to the sustainability cause.

“Climate change and non-inclusive growth pose a real threat to our future. But indifference is our greatest enemy. It is only with the collective efforts and commitment of governments, enterprises and individuals that we can achieve the goal of sustainable development.” Cheh concluded.

The night ended with a tour and a dinner at Integral, where speakers and guests gained first-hand experiences of the fruits of years of efforts by Esquel: an innovative manufacturing model that promotes quality employment as well as responsible production and consumption.

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### **About Integral Conversation**

Integral Conversation aims to establish an independent platform bringing together experts from a wide range of fields to explore a more holistic approach to sustainable development. The dialog takes place in Guilin, a city known for its well-preserved stunning landscape and waters. This location provides a backdrop for the meaningful dialogs while allowing us to reflect on the future of sustainable development.

First launched in 2014, Integral Conversation attracts around 300 leaders and experts every year from the public, private and academic sectors attending the annual events and discussing sustainable development in multi-facets. Past conferences explore topics including the next development model for China, sustainability and living to such basics as clothing, food, urban living and mobility, connectivity and sustainability, reimagining health, and Industry 4.0.

### **About Integral**

In 2011, Esquel Group acquired the Guilin Yin Hai, a textile group with a history of more than half a century and established Guilin Esquel Textiles Co. Ltd. The Group announced the Integral

project in Jiumeiqiao, Guilin in 2012. It is positioned as a Sustainable Development Garden that envisions a pioneering development model for the future that extends beyond the textile industry. With an investment of RMB 2 billion, Integral is a combination of modern technologies, quality employment, innovation and environmental sustainability that showcase how manufacturing and nature can coexist in perfect harmony.

#### **About Esquel Group**

Founded in 1978, Esquel Group is a global textile and apparel manufacturer with a vertically-integrated supply chain from cotton seed research to retailing. Esquel employs a multinational workforce of more than 55,000, with manufacturing facilities in China, Malaysia, Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, and merchandising offices servicing markets worldwide. Esquel manufactures over 110 million pieces of garments annually for leading brands including Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger and Nike.

Long an advocate in innovation, environmental protection and corporate social responsibility, Esquel aspires to make a difference in the textile and apparel industry and contribute to the well-being of a wider community.

For more details, please visit [2019 Integral Conversation](#).

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The 2019 Integral Conversation kicked off with a toasting ceremony on the stage.

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Dee Poon, Managing Director of Brands and Distribution of Esquel Group, welcomed the dinner guests.

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At the welcome dinner, Guymo Wong, Vice President and General Manager (RLP China) of Ronald Lu & Partners discussed the design of Integral, the Sustainable Development Garden, during a fireside chat.

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Teresa Yang, Vice Chairman of Esquel Group, set the tone for 2019 Integral Conversation in her opening remarks.



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Hong Zhong, Vice Mayor of the Guilin Municipal Government, expressed his appreciation to Esquel Group for hosting the Integral Conversation as a platform sharing unique and in-depth insights.

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At the Keynote Speech, Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, Former Minister of International Trade and Industry of Malaysia, shared her views on sustainability as an all encompassing concept that extends beyond environmental conservation.

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[From Right] Hau Lee, Professor of the Stanford Graduate School of Business and Chairman of the Esquel Sustainability Council, hosted the panel on “Role of Corporations – Inclusive Economic Growth to Accelerate Impact”, with speakers Xudong Yin, President APMA Region (Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa) of Novartis Pharmaceuticals; Angela Chan, Managing Director & President of Worldwide of CHARGEURS \* PCC Fashion Technologies, a Division of Chargeurs Group; and Hans Michael Jebsen, Chairman of Jebsen Group.

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[From Right] The panel on “Sustainable Development Goals – The Way Forward” was hosted by Janet Pau, Program Director of the Asia Business Council. Speakers of this panel included Jianyu Zhang, Vice President of the Environmental Defense Fund; Zhirong Hao, Head of the Division of Outreach and Cooperation of the China Center for International Knowledge on Development; and Nannan Lundin, Counsellor and Head of Section of Science and Innovation of the Embassy of Sweden in Beijing.



David Wei, Chairman & Founding Partner of Vision Knight Capital, said efficiency is king in an atmosphere of declining growth rates and online traffic.

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[From Right] Toby Usnik, Author of *The Caring Economy* and Founder and Principal of PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT ( $\pi$ ) hosted the panel on “Closing the Loop – Responsible Consumption and Production”. Panel speakers included: Cyrus Wadia, Former Nike Vice President of Sustainability and White House Assistant Director of Clean Energy; Anurag Bajpayee, Co-founder and CEO of Gradiant Corporation ; and Francois Souchet, Lead of Make Fashion Circular at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

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Marjorie Yang, Chairman of Esquel Group together with Songtao Bai, Deputy Party Secretary of Guilin Municipal Committee led a group of young leaders at Integral Conversation to pledge and reinforced the commitment to the Initiative for Sustainable Development Actions from Businesses.

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John Cheh, Vice Chairman & CEO of Esquel Group, presented the closing remarks for 2019 Integral Conversation.



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Hosted by Esquel Group, 2019 Integral Conversation came to a successful end with distinguished speakers, business leaders, scholars and other key stakeholders joining the event.

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Speakers and guests gained first-hand experiences of the fruits of Esquel's years of efforts: an innovative manufacturing model that promotes quality employment as well as responsible production and consumption.