

Press Release

新聞稿

4 October 2016

**PolyU holds public lecture
by LUI Che Woo Prize – Prize for World Civilisation Laureate
Professor Yuan Longping**

The LUI Che Woo Prize – Prize for World Civilisation (“LUI Che Woo Prize”) Laureate Professor Yuan Longping, widely known as “Father of the Hybrid Rice”, delivered a public lecture to a full house at Hotel ICON, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), today (4 October). At the lecture, Professor Yuan shared his inspiring story of developing the hybrid rice to secure world food supply and his innovative technology in breeding high-yield rice.

Professor Yuan’s public lecture on “Development of hybrid rice for food security in the world” was co-organised by PolyU and LUI Che Woo Prize Limited. Professor Yuan is awarded the Sustainability Prize of the inaugural LUI Che Woo Prize 2016 for his significant contribution to the enhancement of the security of world food supply.

Breeding hybrid crops for greater yields is a natural concept. However, before Professor Yuan's pioneering work, it was widely accepted that this approach could not succeed for a self-pollinating crop like rice. Professor Yuan nonetheless initiated his research on developing hybrid rice in 1964, and, against all odds, finally succeeded in creating unique genetic tools that made hybrid rice feasible after nine years. In 1976, his hybrid rice, with 20% higher yield than traditional rice species, was put into commercial production in China.

Professor Yuan has since then continued in his efforts to perfect the technology, as well as the quality and robustness of the hybrid rice produced. At present, nearly 57% of rice fields in the mainland grow hybrid rice species. It is estimated that the increased output by planting hybrid rice can annually support 70 million more people in the mainland over the inbred rice varieties. He has also trained more than 3,000 scientists and researchers from about 80 developing countries.

In his welcome speech, President of PolyU, Professor Timothy W. Tong said, “PolyU has also set our strategic priority on sustainability, and we have a wide range of research projects, ranging from food safety to sustainable urban development. Today we are so privileged to be here to learn from Professor Yuan’s perseverance on the research that he has been doing for half a century, to learn more about the development of hybrid rice, which is so important for food security for the population of the entire world.”

In attendance were Mr Lawrence Lui, representing Dr Lui Che Woo, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Governors cum Prize Council of LUI Che Woo Prize, and Professor Wong Wing-tak, Dean, Faculty of Applied Science and Textiles, PolyU. More than 500 participants from the government, tertiary education sector and industry, as well as university and secondary school students, attended the lecture.

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Founded in 2015 by Dr Lui Che Woo, a renowned entrepreneur and philanthropist, the LUI Che Woo Prize aims to recognise and honour individuals or organisations all over the world with outstanding achievements that contribute to world civilisation. The laureate will receive a cash award of HK\$20 million, a certificate and a trophy.



Professor Timothy W. Tong (left), President of PolyU, presents Professor Yuan Longping, the LUI Che Woo Prize Laureate, with a souvenir.



Professor Yuan delivers the public lecture titled “Development of hybrid rice for food security in the world”.



Professor Yuan, Professor Tong and guests at the lecture.

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