

【Press Release】 LUI Che Woo Prize – Prize for World Civilisation 2018 Welfare Betterment Prize Laureate Public Lecture

4 OCT 2018

World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General urges for closer collaboration in coping with more severe and frequent meteorological hazards

(Hong Kong, 4 October 2018) – The LUI Che Woo Prize – Prize for World Civilisation and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) today co-hosted the [Welfare Betterment Prize Laureate Public Lecture](#) at PolyU. [The 2018 Welfare Betterment Prize was awarded to the World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#). Representing WMO, Prof Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of WMO, delivered a lecture entitled “Towards a Weather and Climate Resilient World” at the Public Lecture, which was well attended by around 300 guests.

Amongst the VIPs were [Prof. Lawrence J. Lau](#), Chairman of the Prize Recommendation Committee and Prof Timothy W. Tong, PolyU President. The Lecture was moderated by Prof Xiaoli Ding, Associate Dean (Partnership) of Faculty of Construction and Environment, and Chair Professor of Geomatics at Department of Land Surveying and Geo-Informatics of PolyU.

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, volcanic eruptions and drought cause loss of life and property damages in many different places of the world. Natural disasters becomes more frequent and intense nowadays. According to WMO, extreme weather, including record temperatures and heatwaves, drought and disastrous precipitation, has marked the first half of summer in the northern hemisphere. This has had widespread impacts on human health, agriculture, ecosystems and infrastructure and led to devastating wildfires. Hong Kong, with no exception, was hit by super Typhoon Mangkhut just recently. Scientists warn that more such bigger, stronger and more dangerous typhoons are anticipated due to a combination of natural and man-made factors. Global

warming, for example, is increasing the temperatures of the Earth's oceans and atmosphere, leading to more intense storms of all types, including hurricanes.

Professor Taalas, who has a strong science research background particularly for atmospheric sciences and an extensive experience in managing national and international agencies, spoke about the impact of the climate change in many occasions since he took the helm of WMO in 2016. He also discussed the importance of strengthening early warning systems and creating user-friendly climate services, in order to foster a collaborative network of resilience against natural disaster-related loss of life and economic damage.

PolyU President, Prof. Timothy W. Tong, said that PolyU attaches great importance to partnerships and collaborations, and believes that the global community can build resilience and strengthen the ability to withstand and respond to climate change through collective efforts. He also said that PolyU is keen to contribute its expertise and join hands with the international community to promote welfare for mankind and make the world a better place, as manifested in PolyU's Motto: "To learn and to apply, for the benefit of mankind."

The 2018 Welfare Betterment Prize – with Reduction of the Impact of Natural Disasters being this year's specific area of focus – was awarded to WMO, which sets worldwide standards for meteorological hazards. With persistent efforts, WMO developed a good framework for international cooperation and continuously supports its 191 member states and territories to implement the adopted policies, thus enhancing the monitoring, forecasting and communication of meteorological hazards on a global scale. WMO has been pivotal in the tenfold reduction in global loss of life from extreme weather, climate and water-related events observed over the past half-century.

The LUI Che Woo Prize is an annual cross-sector award which aims to recognise and inspire the efforts of compassionate individuals and organisations working to build a more harmonious world. Founded by [Dr. Lui Che Woo](#) in 2015, the Prize is an international award which advances with the times in order to address ever-evolving global needs and challenges. The LUI Che Woo Prize [2018 Prize Presentation Ceremony](#) was held just yesterday (Wednesday, 3 October 2018).



Prof Timothy W. Tong, President of PolyU, gives welcome remarks at the public lecture.



Prof Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of WMO, speaks about pressing issues of climate change which are affecting every one of us in the globe.



Audience enjoying the public lecture by Professor Taalas of WMO.