



香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Hong Kong, 21 October 2013

PRESS RELEASE

AXA and CUHK Proudly Announce the Launch of AXA Professorship of Geography and Resource Management

Protecting people through research into environmental risks

The AXA Research Fund (AXA RF), the scientific initiative of global insurance Group AXA, has awarded EUR 1 million to The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) to create an AXA Professorship of Geography and Resource Management. The position will be held by internationally renowned climate scientist, Professor Gabriel Ngar-Cheung Lau. Professor Lau is the Director of Institute of Environment, Energy and Sustainability at CUHK. In this six-year project, Professor Lau's research will focus on forecasting and understanding of the impact of climate change on East Asia. AXA RF already supports 124 research projects around the world in the field of environmental risks.

The AXA RF provides philanthropic support for research focused on understanding and preventing the risks threatening the environment, human life and our societies. **Henri de Castries, Chairman & CEO of the AXA Group**, revealed the reason of setting up AXA RF, *"The nature of our insurance business is to protect our clients, their families and their goods against potential but uncertain risks. It requires that we allocate time and resources to developing our knowledge and reinforcing our understanding and prevention of those risks. Therefore, the AXA Research Fund was founded in 2007 to finance fundamental research on global risks that have an impact on people and the planet. By betting on the strong engine of scientific progress and the construction of long-term approaches based on a good understanding of the world and intelligent risk management, we hope to contribute to a better future for the next generations."* As of 1 October 2013, the AXA RF has committed a total of EUR 99 million to support 367 research projects around the world. After the first six years of the AXA Research Fund's existence, we are devoting a further EUR 100 million to fundamental research.

Professor Gabriel Ngar-Cheung Lau, the incumbent of AXA Professorship of Geography and Resource Management at CUHK, explained the importance of climate change study to the world and the next generation, *"Climate change, such as global warming, altered rainfall patterns, sea level rise and increased incidence of extreme weather events, has strong implications on our general lifestyle, agricultural practices, economic growth, public health and the design of our habitat in urban and rural settings. It is very important that we understand how the climate system will behave in the coming decades, so as to make advance planning to adapt to our changing environment. I am delighted that AXA supports climate system research that will lead to a better understanding of the risks we face."*



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The AXA Professorship will advance CUHK's cross-disciplinary educational and research agendas in the environmental field. To achieve this, Professor Lau will launch scientific investigations into climate variability and change on different time and space scales, and leverage CUHK's recently-established Institute of Environment, Energy and Sustainability (IEES), which is responsible for environment-related education, research and knowledge transfer. He will also be devoted to nurturing the next generation of climate and environmental scientists in Hong Kong and mainland China.

In his research, Professor Lau will study various weather systems and their influences on the livelihood and commercial / farming activities in East Asia, which has experienced strong economic growth in recent decades. The findings will contribute to enhanced skills in forecasting unusual weather and climate events on time scales ranging from weeks to several years, and will also serve as important input to planners and policy-makers in their efforts to manage water and air resources in this region for the coming decades.

This Professorship will also raise awareness among the general public on the consequences of human activities on the natural environment, thereby spurring constructive community actions such as lifestyle changes and implementation of various conservation measures.

Stuart Harrison, CEO of AXA Hong Kong and Sponsor of the AXA Professorship of Geography and Resource Management, commented: *"AXA is very proud to support CUHK in establishing this new academic professorship. This is a true intellectual partnership fostering AXA's mission to better understand risks related to climate change. Climate change has a great impact on our health, and as a responsible insurer who protects people against risks and has a long-term commitment to Hong Kong, it is of strategic importance to AXA that we better understand climate change and its consequences on resource management. Thus we can further develop prevention and protection to the benefit of the population."*

Professor Joseph J.Y. Sung, Vice-Chancellor and President of CUHK, thanked the AXA RF for entrusting the University with the important mission of advancing environmental education, research and knowledge transfer. He said, *"Under the leadership of Professor Lau, CUHK aims at synergising the existing studies on climate change in Geography and Resource Management, Environmental Science, Architecture, Earth System Science, Urban Studies, Energy Engineering, Life Science and Public Health. We wish to build up a strategic network and an intellectual hub of climate change research, which may provide policy advice to governments of all levels. We look forward to working in close partnership with the AXA RF in bringing long-term impact to society and making a greener and better future for the next generation."*



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Photo captions:

Henri de Castries, Chairman & CEO of the AXA Group, explains to the audience it is important that AXA Group could better understand risks faced by human beings through research.



Professor Joseph J.Y. Sung, Vice-Chancellor and President of CUHK, (right) presents a certificate of appreciation to Stuart Harrison, CEO of AXA Hong Kong and Sponsor of the AXA Professorship of Geography and Resource Management to thank AXA for its generous support to CUHK.



Professor Gabriel Ngar-Cheung Lau presents his inaugural lecture titled 'Diagnosis of Atmospheric Variability Associated with Storm Tracks, El Nino, Heat Waves and Climate Change'.





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(From left to right) Stuart Harrison, Professor Joseph J.Y. Sung, Henri de Castries and Professor Gabriel Ngar-Cheung Lau, seal the time capsule which stored the environmental aspirations from AXA Hong Kong staff members, CUHK students and green ambassadors, and themselves.



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About AXA Research Fund

The AXA Research Fund is the scientific philanthropy initiative of AXA, the global leader in insurance. It aims to further understand and manage today's and tomorrow's risks. Since its founding in 2007, the Fund has committed a total of EUR 99 million to more than 360 promising research projects at leading academic institutions in 27 countries around the world. In China and for Chinese researchers working abroad, the Fund has so far committed EUR 2 million for four projects. The funds are granted based on a decision by the Fund's Scientific Board. The Fund undertakes long-term partnerships, focusing on research to contribute to the public debate and help manage or prevent risks to the environment, human life and societies. In June 2013, AXA announced plans to devote a further EUR 100 million to this type of fundamental research.

For more information: www.axa-research.org

Twitter: #axarf

About AXA Group

The AXA Group is a worldwide leader in insurance and asset management, with more than 160,000 employees serving 102 million clients in 57 countries. In 2012, IFRS revenues amounted to Euro 90.1 billion and IFRS underlying earnings to Euro 4.3 billion. AXA had Euro 1,116 billion in assets under management as of December 31, 2012. The AXA ordinary share is listed on compartment A of Euronext Paris under the ticker symbol CS (ISN FR 0000120628 – Bloomberg: CS FP – Reuters: AXAF.PA). AXA's American Depository Share is also quoted on the OTC QX platform under the ticker symbol AXAHY. The AXA Group is included in the main international SRI indexes, such as Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and FTSE4GOOD. It is a founding member of the UN Environment Programme's Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) Principles for Sustainable Insurance and a signatory of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment. Further details are on the website: www.axa.com

About AXA Hong Kong

AXA Hong Kong, a member of the AXA Group, prides itself on serving over 1 million customers in Hong Kong and Macau. Besides being one of the largest health protection providers, it is also the number 1 Property & Casualty insurance provider¹ and a market leader in motor insurance.

AXA Hong Kong is committed to helping its customers achieve stability and prosperity by providing a comprehensive range of financial protection, health protection, wealth management and retirement solutions.

¹Based on 2012 Office of the Commissioner of Insurance market share statistics

About The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Founded in 1963, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is a forward-looking comprehensive research university with a global vision and a mission to combine tradition with modernity, and to bring together China and the West. CUHK teachers and students hail from all around the world.

About Institute of Environment, Energy and Sustainability at CUHK

CUHK established The Institute of Environment, Energy and Sustainability (IEES) in 2011 to strengthen its role in advising, guiding and leading the community through research, education and knowledge transfer in energy, environment and sustainability areas. IEES will embark on world class multi-disciplinary research and education on climate change, energy, sustainable urban environment, public health and environmental policy. The institute also provides an ideal platform to foster collaboration with strategic global partners to develop joint research and teaching programmes, as well as to hold international conferences and symposia with a view to impacting on public policies.



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