

PRESS RELEASE

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Nobel Prize winning scientist elected as future President of the International Council for Science

Professor Yuan Tseh Lee, a Nobel Prize winning chemist from China: Taipei has been elected as the future President of the International Council for Science (ICSU). A world leader in the field of chemical dynamics, Lee was elected by representatives from ICSU's 114 National Members and 29 International Scientific Unions at the 29th General Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, 21–24 October. He will take up the appointment in April 2010 and will succeed the current ICSU President, Catherine Bréchnignac, in October 2011.

Professor Lee was born and educated in China: Taipei, before moving to the US where he obtained a PhD in chemistry from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1965. In the ensuing years, his career flourished, both as a creative scientist and an inspiring teacher. In 1986, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his seminal contribution to the development of reaction dynamics—a new field of research in chemistry at the time. His use of crossed molecular beams allowed the study of complex reaction mechanisms beyond the capability of previous methods. Lee returned home in 1994, taking up the position as President of the Academy of Sciences located in Taipei. Under his 12-year leadership the institution was transformed into a world class research centre, attracting scholars and creative young scientists from around the world.

His achievements have been recognized with many awards and professional memberships, which include the US National Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS). He has been involved with ICSU for 15 years and served on the Standing Committee on Freedom in the Conduct of Science from 1996 to 2005.

'I am honoured and excited to be elected the next President of ICSU, an organization that has been at the forefront of international science for more than 75 years,' said Lee. 'As a child I was inspired by Madame Curie who believed that scientific knowledge belonged to all mankind. It is my strong belief that ICSU will pave the way in ensuring that scientific knowledge is available to all—a critical factor in providing the solutions for sustainable development, climate change mitigation, global human health issues and alleviating poverty.'

Lee's demonstrated leadership qualities and extensive experience in international academic cooperation, will serve ICSU well as the organization forges ahead to strengthen international science for the benefit of society.

Other Members elected to the ICSU Executive Board

Officers

Vice-President for Scientific Planning and Review: Kari Raivio, University of Helsinki, Finland

Vice-President for External Relations: Reiko Kuroda, University of Tokyo, Japan

Secretary-General: Maurice Tchente, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

Treasurer: Hans Rudolf Ott, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zürich), Switzerland

Catherine Bréchnignac, President (Centre national de la recherche scientifique, France) and Goverdhan Mehta, Past-President (Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, India) assumed their offices during the General Assembly.

Ordinary Members

From National Members

Fu Congbin, China: CAST; Maurizio Iaccarino, Italy; Sergio Pastrana, Cuba; Abdul Hamid Zakri, Malaysia

From Union Members

Bryan Henry, chemistry; Dov Jaron, physical and engineering sciences in medicine; Bruce Overmier, psychology; Uri Shamir, geodesy and geophysics

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