

Speech by CE at Yidan Prize Award Presentation Ceremony 2018 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Yidan Prize Award Presentation Ceremony 2018 this evening (December 9):

Dr Chen (Founder of the Yidan Prize, Dr Charles Chen), Your Royal Highness (Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands), Mrs Machel (Child rights advocate and humanitarian, Mrs Graca Machel), the Right Honourable Mr Brown (United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Right Honourable Mr Gordon Brown), laureates, your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is a great pleasure to join you for tonight's Yidan Prize Presentation Ceremony.

At last year's inaugural Prize Presentation Ceremony, I commended Yidan Prize founder Dr Charles Chen for his vision and extraordinary contribution to education, here in Hong Kong and around the world. Though the Yidan Prize is still at its infancy, I can see that it is already connecting a world of educational innovators, researchers and policymakers. Such connectivity is bound to help education to excel.

Tonight, we are congratulating this year's Yidan Prize Laureates, Professor Larry Hedges and Professor Anant Agarwal, who have made exemplary efforts in helping our young people to excel. I should add that our two laureates were chosen from among nearly 1 000 nominations spanning more than 90 countries. That, ladies and gentlemen, is remarkable testament to the sterling achievement of the two distinguished professors as well as the global reach and reputation of the Yidan Prize.

This year's Yidan Prize Laureates are impressive and inspiring recipients. Professor Hedges, the 2018 Yidan Prize for Education Research Laureate, is a global leader in applied statistics. His landmark work has shown the way and the value in taking a scientific approach to improving education.

Professor Agarwal, this year's Education Development Laureate, is honoured for applying technology to education, giving learners around the world access to high-quality education. Professor Agarwal is the founder and CEO of edX, an online learning platform that has helped millions of students around the world since its launch in 2012.

While we will learn more about the laureates' respective work in the video later on, I have no doubt that they share one thing in common, that is, both of them are deeply aware that education is a powerful tool in addressing

many of the world's most daunting problems, and the best that we as parents, teachers or officials can give to the younger generation is education. My Government is equally committed to education, to ensuring that it is comprehensive, that it is of the highest quality, that it is available to all, whatever their background, whatever their financial means. What we are still searching for answers is the best approach to nurturing our young minds to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world and to rise to challenges brought by advances in technology.

In my Election Manifesto when campaigning for the position of the Chief Executive in early 2017, I said talent is the most important element in Hong Kong's continued development, and education is the key to nurturing talent. I pledged that Government expenditure on education is the most significant investment for our future.

Since taking office last July, I have committed some HK\$8.3 billion in our annual recurrent expenditure on education, or an increase of over 10 per cent. At the same time, I have invited some 70 education experts to help us review various aspects of our education policies.

I know of course that money alone is not enough – and never will be. We need to be guided by evidence in improving our education and by applying technology in so many relevant ways to help students to learn and excel. These are areas we have to thank this year's Yidan Prize recipients for their wonderful work.

My congratulations once again to Professor Hedges and Professor Agarwal, and I wish everyone a most enjoyable evening. Thank you very much.