



PYONGYANG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Junjin Dong, Rakrang District, Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea

For immediate release

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Three Nobel Laureates visit unique university in Pyongyang : discuss science, medicine and economics with students and staff

Pyongyang, Thursday 5 May 2016:

The Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) was honoured today by the visit of Nobel Prize-winners Professor Aaron Ciechanover (Prize for Chemistry, 2004; from Israel) Professor Finn Kydland (Economics, 2004; Norwegian) and Dr Sir Richard Roberts (Medicine, 1993; British). They presented a series of formal lectures and had discussions on their specialist topics with students from the North Korean academic elite, who are at PUST receiving science education in English from an international faculty.

The meeting was one of several DPRK university and other visits by the Laureates, in a delegation arranged by Vienna-based International Peace Foundation, led by IPF advisory board chairman HSH Prince Alfred of Liechtenstein and founder-chairman Uwe Morawetz. Their trip to the DPR Korea is called 'Bridges' – towards a culture of peace. In his introductory speech, Morawetz outlined the purpose of IPF, to develop dialogues founded on non-political and non-sectarian principles. IPF's international advisory board includes 20 Nobel laureates and other individuals known world-wide in entertainment, media and the arts. The mission to the DPRK is one of a series of similar events, held in several countries in the Asian region.

Welcoming the delegation, Dr James Chinkyung Kim, Founder-President of PUST, remarked that PUST is also seeking to build bridges and not walls, love not hatred, through long-term engagement in education and research that will benefit everyone.

The international and DPRK leaders and faculty of PUST were delighted to welcome the Laureates and to have them meet many PUST students. In the first session, the Laureates presented lectures on their specialist topics and answered several questions from students. After an informal lunch, the afternoon break-out sessions had some presentations from PUST students and researchers, leading to lively discussions with the Laureates. They were interested to know about the topics being studied and researched at PUST. Students answered Professor Kydland's questions about the particular economic system of the DPRK and asked him to suggest research topics that they might pursue. In a parallel session on medicine and biochemistry, Dr Roberts and Professor Ciechanover had a dynamic interaction with graduate and research students about experimental methods and how to do good research. The visitors were impressed by the quality of research being done at PUST, despite very restricted resources.

The high-level presentations and the intensive scientific discussions at this IFP 'Bridges' event at PUST have opened-up more possibilities for PUST students and researchers to engage with the international scientific community. It is hoped to have further visits from Nobel laureates and renowned researchers, at future international conferences and lectures arranged by PUST. International exchanges of researchers and students may also be arranged.

About PUST:

PUST is a unique partnership between overseas faculty and supporters (primarily Christian charities) and the DPRK education authorities, providing a high-quality, English-language-based university science education, in subjects that will benefit the people of the DPR Korea.

PUST seeks to build bridges of trust and confidence between the DPRK and the wider world. Current subject areas are electrical and computer engineering, including electronics hardware and software; agriculture and life sciences, including plant breeding, food, nutrition and bio-chemistry; and management and finance. The Medical Sciences division has begun teaching classes in dentistry and later will cover public health, medicine, nursing and pharmacy. Future plans include a department of architecture, construction and the built environment.

PUST holds an international conference every two years: the next one is in October 2017.

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About International Peace Foundation:

Initiator and facilitator of the event series "Bridges - Dialogues Towards a Culture of Peace"

The foundation has been established exclusively for not-for-profit purposes, in particular to support peace universities as well as scientific projects and institutions dealing with research into conflict prevention and strategies for the solution of conflicts as well as with promoting peace activities, understanding and social exchange between peoples, their cultures and traditions. The foundation supports, in particular, not-for-profit scientific institutions of international, intercultural and multidisciplinary character which contribute to the development of new comprehensive approaches of thinking and acting.

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