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FRENCH CENTER OPENS AT HKUST

Academic exchanges and research collaboration between France and Hong Kong received a solid endorsement recently with the inauguration of the French Center at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST).

The French Center was officially opened by Mr Claude Allègre, French Minister for Education, Research and Technology, and Prof Chia-Wei Woo, President of HKUST on 27 February 1999.

"As one of China's very top universities, HKUST aims to reach out nationally and internationally, and be world-class in all its academic as well as research and development (R&D) pursuits. The inauguration of the French Center under the aegis of the Europe Institute marks an important step in our strategic alliance with France, one of the leaders in the world of science and technology," Prof Woo said.

"I'm really gratified by the quality and the results of our new collaboration with Hong Kong universities, mainly with HKUST. We have signed several agreements with HKUST, including postdoctoral fellowships, and have started to develop our scientific exchanges through the new France/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme," said Mr Claude Allègre, who was on an official visit to Hong Kong.

"Of the nine joint research projects selected in the pilot scheme, six are proposed by HKUST and various advanced French laboratories," he added. Introduced in 1998-99 to promote research collaboration, the scheme is supported by Hong Kong's Research Grants Council and the French government.

The French Center has been in full operation before its inauguration. New successes include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed recently between the University and the Ministry for Education, Research and Technology, and the French Conference of University Presidents. Under the MOU, the following programs will be pursued: postdoctoral fellowships, visiting professorships, PhD studentships and student exchange.

In the area of industrial collaboration, the French Center has established a joint research program with French corporate giant Vivendi on water management and waste treatment.

The Europe Institute is established on HKUST campus to promote academic exchange and R&D collaboration with European universities, research institutes and corporations. It aims to provide footholds for European institutions and corporations seeking to establish a presence in Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and other parts of East Asia. Two national centers have so far been formed under the Institute: the French Center and the German Center.

Note to Editors:

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