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SINGAPORE, March 30, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has announced the establishment of the UNESCO Chair in Sustainability Law Futures at Singapore Management University (SMU), placing the university at the forefront of legal research and policy innovation for sustainable development in Asia-Pacific. Associate Professor of Law Michelle Lim has been appointed as Chairholder.

As host of the UNESCO Chair, SMU joins a prestigious global network of over 1,100 UNESCO Chairs across 130 countries, connecting the University's faculty and students to more than 10,000 international academics and researchers dedicated to advancing education, science and open knowledge through international cooperation.

Associate Professor Michelle Lim from SMU Yong Pung How School of Law is an internationally recognised scholar in sustainability law and governance. Her work focuses on advancing legal frameworks that help societies anticipate and respond to complex sustainability challenges. Under her leadership, the UNESCO Chair in Sustainability Law Futures will advance futures-oriented legal frameworks that address complex sustainability challenges, promote interdisciplinary collaboration, and support policymakers and communities in shaping resilient governance solutions.

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SMU President, Professor Lily Kong, said, "Aligned with SMU2030, the University's strategic plan which is anchored on a clear and purposeful impact agenda, the UNESCO Chair in Sustainability Law Futures embodies our vision of creating knowledge that matters. Through this initiative, SMU will build a platform for global collaboration, knowledge exchange, and legal innovation that leaves a lasting mark on sustainable development."

Associate Professor Lim said, "Sustainability challenges are evolving rapidly, and legal systems must be able to anticipate emerging risks and opportunities. Through this UNESCO Chair, we hope to bring together scholars, policymakers and communities to explore futures approaches to sustainability law. In particular, we explore the role of story-telling both as intangible cultural heritage, and as law, to link past and future in the design of legal frameworks oriented towards desirable futures for people and planet."

The Chair will contribute to the activities of UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector through research, teaching and training, as well as community action and communication. Through collaborative research, open-access resources and public dialogues, the Chair will facilitate knowledge exchange between academia, policymakers and communities, as well as support efforts to strengthen sustainability law education by integrating interdisciplinary perspectives and forward-looking policy approaches.

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Enclosures:

- Annex 1 - Capsule Biography of Associate Professor Michelle Lim
- Annex 2 - About the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme

About Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative, and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative, and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 13,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU comprises eight schools: College of Integrative Studies, College of Graduate Research Studies, School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, Yong Pung How School of Law and School of Social Sciences.

SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters', and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with its schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

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SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government, and the wider community.

Annex 1

Capsule Biography of Associate Professor Michelle Lim

Michelle Lim is an Associate Professor in Law, School of Law, Singapore Management University. Her interdisciplinary scholarship occurs at the intersection between biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

Lim's work focuses on futures-oriented biodiversity law research aimed at advancing equity and sustainability under conditions of unprecedented environmental change. She is increasingly interested in approaches which allows affective engagement with scholarship and explores ways which challenge the form of scholarship including through creative and imaginative means of expression (e.g. speculative fiction, poetry).

Lim holds a double degree in Science (Ecosystem Management) and Law (First-class Honours) and a PhD on legal and institutional arrangements for transboundary biodiversity conservation at the University of New England, Australia. Prior to joining Singapore Management University, Lim has held positions in Macquarie University, University of Adelaide and the University of Dundee.

Lim is Co-Editor in Chief of the Review of European, Comparative and International Environmental Law. She was a fellow on the Global Assessment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and an author of the IPBES/IPCC joint workshop report. She sits on the Advisory Board of Ambio. Lim was awarded the 2016/2017 Law Council of Australia Mahla Pearlman Australian Young Environmental Lawyer of the Year Award and the 2021 Law and Society Association of Australia and New Zealand publication prize for a published scholarly article or book chapter for the paper: "Extinction: hidden in plain sight—Can stories of 'the last' unearth environmental law's unspeakable truth?." Griffith Law Review. 1-32.

Dr Lim has diverse teaching experience spanning the fields of sustainability, environmental, international, commercial and corporate law as well as torts, and ethics.

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Annex 2

About the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme

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Launched in 1992 to promote international inter-university cooperation, the Programme has grown to include around 1100 Chairs and 50 networks across 130 countries. This network of universities around the world supports UNESCO's work in education, the natural and social sciences, culture and communication, to help address pressing challenges and contribute to the development of their societies. The UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Network teams contribute at each stage of the UNESCO's work: from the exploration of emerging issues, through the development of international normative instruments to the implementation of policy recommendations at the national level. They also bring together partners in academia, civil society, local communities and policy-makers in dialogue for project implementation. <https://www.unesco.org/en/unitwin>

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