Three S’poreans picked for young global leaders’ forum

The top minds were chosen from 8,000 worldwide to discuss critical world issues

By CHANG AI-LIEN
Science Correspondent

SHE has already been singled out as one of 100 young people expected to be the 21st century’s leading innovators by Technology Review, the innovation magazine of the renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States.

Now, Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology head Jackie Ying has been hand-picked again, as one of the world’s top young minds set to change the world. She is one of three Singaporeans among 237 people worldwide selected from a pool of 8,000 candidates to be part of The Forum of Young Global Leaders.

The other two Singaporeans are 37-year-old MP Penny Low and National University of Singapore law dean Tan Cheng Han, 40.

The Switzerland-based non-profit foundation brings together outstanding leaders aged below 40 who have “demonstrated a commitment to serving society” and are “willing to devote their energy and expertise for five years to tackle the most critical issues facing the world”.

Candidates, chosen by an international panel, are evaluated by a nomination committee chaired by Jordan’s Queen Rania. Other well-known personalities include actress Nurul Ariffin, an anti-Aids activist and member of Indonesia’s Golkar Party, and Google co-founder Sergey Brin.

The forum was created last year by Professor Klaus Schwab, executive chairman of the World Economic Forum. He said: “We would like to integrate those young global leaders into processes which will allow them to have a real impact on global affairs and to make sure that global decision-making preserves the interests of the next generation.”

“The Forum of Young Global Leaders will be a strong force from all walks of life to shake up traditional thinking and to bring a bold, forward-looking approach to the world.”

Prof Ying, 38, is an expert in nanotechnology and its use in biotechnology, medical and chemical sciences, where materials made from tiny particles can be tailored to produce a wide range of products, including safer drugs and better catalysts to cut air pollution from cars.

She said: “My research in nanotechnology is driven towards improving health care, the quality of life, energy conservation and preserving the environment. I believe this will help improve the human condition.”

Associate Professor Tan hopes to contribute in the areas of law and education. “I hope to add to the dialogue process by providing insight into how the law can facilitate economic and human development and how education can uplift the lives of people in developing countries,” he said.

Miss Low is the founder of Planner’s Hub Consultancy, which specialises in training financial planners in Singapore and Malaysia, and providing consultancy to public listed technology companies and financial institutions. She could not be reached for comment yesterday.

The group will have its inaugural summit in Zermatt, Switzerland, in June. There, it will attempt to assess current trends to construct a shared vision of how the world can be improved by 2020, and design global strategies to make this vision a reality.