

## The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Awards For Women in Science Honour Five Exceptional Women Who Move Science Forward

Paris, 8 November, 2011 – The L'ORÉAL-UNESCO For Women in Science partnership announced today the five exceptional women scientists from around the world who will receive the 2012 L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Awards in Life Sciences.

An international network of nearly 1,000 scientists nominates the candidates for each year's Awards. The five Laureates are then selected by an independent, international Jury presided by Pr. Günter Blobel, Nobel Prize in Medicine 1999.

Professor Blobel said: "The work of the 2012 Award Laureates yielded remarkable insights into human health issues, such as diabetes, brain seizures, bacterial and viral infections, and extending to the cultivation of plants in arid areas. Their research is truly original and each is among the best in five distinct regions of the world."

Faced with global issues such as diminishing resources, increasing and aging populations, and the consequent medical and social challenges, L'Oréal and UNESCO are convinced that these women researchers will have a major impact on society and help light the way to the future.

### The 2012 Laureates in Life Sciences are:



#### AFRICA and the ARAB STATES

##### Professor Jill FARRANT

Research Chair – Plant Molecular Physiology, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

*"For discovering how plants survive under dry conditions."*



#### ASIA / PACIFIC

##### Professor Ingrid SCHEFFER

Chair of Paediatric Neurology Research, University of Melbourne, AUSTRALIA

*"For identifying genes involved in some forms of epilepsy."*



#### EUROPE

##### Professor Frances ASHCROFT

Royal Society Research Professor, Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics, Oxford University, UNITED KINGDOM

*"For advancing our understanding of insulin secretion and of neonatal diabetes."*



#### LATIN AMERICA

##### Professor Susana LÓPEZ

Developmental Genetics and Molecular Physiology, Department of the Institute of Biotechnology, National University of Mexico, Cuernavaca, MEXICO

*"For identifying how rotaviruses cause the death of 600,000 children each year."*



#### NORTH AMERICA

##### Professor Bonnie BASSLER

Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Department of Molecular Biology, Princeton University, USA

*"For understanding chemical communication between bacteria and opening new doors for treating infections."*

The Awards Ceremony will take place on March 22, 2012 at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. An outstanding role model for the next generation of scientists, each Laureate receives US\$100,000 in recognition of her contribution to the advancement of science.



## **A Jury Made Up of Eminent Scientists**

The 2012 L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Awards Life Sciences Jury is made up of 18 eminent members of the international scientific community. The President of the jury is Pr. Gunter Blobel, Nobel Prize in Medicine 1999, who has served in this capacity since 2005. Professor Christian de Duve, Nobel Prize in Medicine 1974, is the Founding President of the Awards, and Irina Bokova, General Director of UNESCO, is Honorary President.

## **A pioneering programme for the promotion of women in science.**

For the past 14 years, the L'Oréal Corporate Foundation and UNESCO have supported women researchers throughout the world who contribute to moving science forward. Each year, the For Women in Science Programme highlights scientific excellence and encourages promising talent.

Since 1998, the L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Awards have recognised 72 Laureates, exceptional women who have made great advances in scientific research. Two of them have gone on to receive the Nobel Prize.

In its aim to promote and encourage women throughout their scientific careers, the For Women in Science partnership has also developed a global network of International, Regional and National Fellowship programs aimed at supporting young women who represent the future of science. To date, Fellowships have been granted to more than 1,200 women in 103 countries, permitting them to pursue their research in institutions at home or abroad. The programme has become a benchmark of scientific excellence on an international scale.

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### **About the L'Oréal Foundation**

*The L'Oréal Foundation, created in 2007, pursues the goal of making the world a better place each day. It draws on the Group's values and business to strengthen and perpetuate the Group's commitment to social responsibility. As the second-largest corporate foundation in France, the L'Oréal Foundation is committed to three types of action: promoting scientific research in the fundamental and human sciences, supporting education and helping individuals made vulnerable by alternations to their appearance to reclaim their rightful place in society.*

### **About UNESCO**

*Since its creation in 1945, UNESCO has pursued its mission of promoting science at the service of sustainable development and peace. It focuses on policy development and building capacities in science, technology and innovation and promoting and strengthening science education and engineering. UNESCO fosters the sustainable management of freshwater, oceans and terrestrial resources, the protection of biodiversity, and using the power of science to cope with climate change and natural hazards. The Organization also works to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to promote equality between men and women, especially in scientific research.*