



**L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science  
announces the Five Laureates of its 15th Annual Awards**

Paris, 19 October 2012 – The L'Oréal Foundation and UNESCO today announced the five women scientists who will be honoured as the 15th L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Laureates.

**The 2013 For Women in Science Awards**

The research of the 2013 Laureates demonstrates exceptionally original approaches to fundamental research in the Physical Sciences, from contributing to better understanding climate change to advancing research on neurodegenerative diseases and potentially uncovering new energy sources.

The Laureates of the 2013 L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards in Physical Sciences are:

- Professor Francisca Nneke OKEKE, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Nigeria)  
For her significant contributions to the understanding of daily variations of the ion currents in the upper atmosphere which may further our understanding of climate change.
- Professor Pratibha GAI, University of York (United Kingdom)  
For ingeniously modifying her electron microscope so that she was able to observe chemical reactions occurring at surface atoms of catalysts which will help scientists in their development of new medicines or new energy sources.
- Professor Reiko KURODA, Tokyo University of Science (Japan)  
For discovering the functional importance of the difference between left handed and right handed molecules which has wide applications including research on neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's.
- Professor Marcia BARBOSA, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre (Brazil)  
For discovering one of the peculiarities of water which may lead to better understanding of how earthquakes occur and how proteins fold which is important for the treatment of diseases.
- Professor Deborah JIN, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and University of Colorado, Boulder (USA)  
For having been the first to cool down molecules so much that she can observe chemical reactions in slow motion which may help further understanding of molecular processes which are important for medicine or new energy sources.

The Awards jury was chaired by Professor Ahmed Zewail, winner of the 1999 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and Linus Pauling Chair Professor of Chemistry and Professor of Physics, California Institute of Technology.

*“These five outstanding women scientists have given the world a better understanding of how nature works,”* said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. *“Their pioneering research and discoveries have changed the way we think in various areas of the physical sciences and opened new frontiers in science and technology. Such key developments have the potential to transform our society. Their work, their dedication, serves as an inspiration to us all.”*

On 28 March 2013, the five Laureates will be honoured at an Awards ceremony in Paris and will receive US\$100,000 in recognition of their accomplishments.

### **A global programme promoting women and careers in science**

“We are very proud to have changed the face of science by supporting women in science” said Jean-Paul Agon, Chairman and CEO of L’Oréal and Chairman of L’Oréal Foundation. “We are convinced that science and women bring hope and foster discovery, innovation and excellence. All the best talents must be called upon to accomplish this mission. L’Oréal believes in women, L’Oréal believes in science.”

Established in 1998, the L’Oréal-UNESCO partnership is a long-term commitment to recognizing women in science and supporting scientific vocations. For Women in Science has grown into a global programme that includes International, Regional and National Fellowships and an international network of more than 1300 women in 106 countries.

Over the past 15 years, the For Women in Science Award has recognized a great diversity of scientists, 77 women working across the spectrum of research, from curing diseases to protecting the environment. Year after year, the creativity of these women in science and the importance of their findings continuously contribute to better understanding and improving the world we live in.

[www.forwomeninscience.com](http://www.forwomeninscience.com)  
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#### **About the L’Oréal Foundation**

*The L'Oréal Foundation embodies the L'Oréal Group's commitment to embracing corporate citizenship through acts of generosity. It focuses on two principal causes, the promotion of science and helping the most vulnerable.*

*Science, characterized by excellence, generosity and creativity, is one of the core commitments of the Foundation. Its exemplary programme, "For Women in Science" developed in partnership with UNESCO, which encourages women to pursue careers in scientific research, has grown to include women throughout the world.*

*The Foundation's other commitments focus on beauty - through reconstructive surgery, socio-aesthetic workshops or education - as a means of improving the life quality of vulnerable people, helping them return to normal life, and restoring the self-esteem and dignity they need to make their way 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.*