



## **Discover the laureates of the 25<sup>th</sup> L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards**

**Paris, June 1, 2023** – The Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO are proud to announce the five 2023 laureates of the *For Women in Science International Awards*. On 15<sup>th</sup> June, the Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO will honor these distinguished women scientists from five major regions of the world with exceptional careers for the contribution to society of their research in Physical sciences, Mathematics and Computer science.

The unique ceremony, which will take place at UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris, will also be the opportunity to celebrate 25 years of the L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science* Program, which has become well renowned for recognizing the scientific excellence of female researchers at national, regional and international levels.

### **THE WINNERS OF THE 25<sup>TH</sup> L'ORÉAL-UNESCO FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE INTERNATIONAL AWARDS**

The five 2023 laureates were chosen by an independent jury presided over by Professor Artur Avila, Professor at Institute of Mathematics University of Zurich (Switzerland), Extraordinary Researcher at IMPA (Instituto de Mathematica Pura e Aplicada) Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Fields medal winner in 2014, for the 25<sup>th</sup> L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science International Awards*, in the fields of Physical science, Mathematics and Computer science.



#### **LAUREATE FOR AFRICA AND THE ARAB STATES**

Professor Suzana Nunes - Chemistry

Professor of Chemical and Environmental Science and Engineering, Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia

Prof. Suzana Nunes is awarded for her outstanding work in developing innovative membrane filters to achieve highly efficient chemical separations with a lower carbon footprint. Her research has proven to be particularly beneficial to the water, petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries in achieving a more sustainable environment.



### **LAUREATE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Professor Anamaría Font - Physics

Professor of Physics, Central University of Venezuela

Prof. Anamaría Font is awarded for her important contributions in theoretical particle physics, in particular to the study of String Theory. Her research has furthered the theory's implications for the structure of matter and quantum gravity, which is also relevant to the description of black holes and the first instants after the big bang.



### **LAUREATE FOR NORTH AMERICA**

Professor Aviv Regev - Bioinformatics

Executive Vice President and Global Head of Genentech Research and Early Development, Genentech/Roche, San Francisco

Prof. Aviv Regev is awarded for her pioneering work applying mathematics and computer science to revolutionize cell biology. Her research enables scientists to discover and characterize the trillions of cells within the body and enhances scientists' ability to decipher and target the mechanisms that cause disease, in order to develop better diagnostics and therapies.



### **LAUREATE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Professor Lidia Morawska - Earth and environmental science

Distinguished Professor, School of Earth Sciences and Climate, Queensland University of Technology, Australia and Director of the International Laboratory for air quality and health

Prof. Lidia Morawska is awarded for her excellent research in the field of air pollution and its impact on human health and the environment, with a specific focus on atmospheric particulate matter. Her extraordinary dedication and impact have built a bridge from fundamental science to real-world policy and practice to provide clean air for all.



### **LAUREATE FOR EUROPE**

Professor Frances Kirwan - Mathematics

Savilian Professor of Geometry, University of Oxford

Prof. Frances Kirwan is recognized for her exceptional work in pure mathematics combining geometry and algebra in order to develop techniques to understand the classification of geometric objects. These techniques have been used by theoretical physicists searching for mathematical descriptions of our universe. Her recent work has the potential to help scientists to extract crucial information from large complex data sets.

## **25 YEARS TO PROMOTE WOMEN IN SCIENCE**

For 25 years, the Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO have worked together to promote women in science through the *For Women in Science* International Awards, and the Young Talents Programs, putting women scientists in the spotlight and contributing to breaking the glass ceiling in science.

"I gained significant visibility in Canada and internationally as a result of the For Women In Science award, which opened more doors in science, engineering and biomedical research," explains Prof. Molly Shoichet from Canada, the International Laureate for North America in 2015.

For the young women scientists, obtaining recognition through the Young Talents program is often decisive, as it encourages them to pursue their career path: "I was thinking of abandoning science. This award changed my life. I'm thriving now as a woman in science and am very grateful for this support" explains Dr Mónica López Hidalgo (Mexico), recipient of the Young Talents Award in 2017.

It also enables them to build self-confidence and leadership skills: "This award came at a key moment in my life which allowed me to have confidence in myself and to continue in the world of research" reports Dr Lucie Barblu-Levast (France), who won the Young Talents Award in 2018.

Since its creation, the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science program has:

**Honored more than 4100 women scientists,**

**including 127 International Laureates**

and more than **4000 young female researchers.**

**52 programs** in **more than 110 countries.**

Nearly **50 scientific partner institutions.**

**More than 500 scientists involved** each year.

## PROMOTING THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN SCIENTISTS

At the end of the 1990s, women represented 27% of researchers worldwide. In 2014, this percentage increased to 30%, and today, **one researcher in three is a woman (33%).**<sup>1</sup> Although the number of women pursuing scientific careers is gradually rising, in the domain of research, this progress is very insufficient. Furthermore, the glass ceiling remains a reality: only 18% of senior scientific roles are held by women in Europe, and only 12% of the members of national science academies globally are women. Meanwhile, **less than 4%<sup>2</sup> of Nobel Prizes in natural sciences have been awarded to women.**

**Alexandra Palt, Executive Director of the Fondation L'Oréal observes that:** "In the time of a generation, the For Women in Science program has contributed to creating a real transformation by raising the profile of women representing every continent and breaking new ground in all disciplines. However, while we are conscious of the progress we have made, we remain determined, as the task remains significant. The presence of women in science and particularly in senior positions is still too low due to the gender inequality and discrimination they still have to face. We cannot encourage young women to direct their paths towards a scientific career without the assurance that they will be able to flourish with freedom and in complete safety in their workplace. Our most important mission is to promote, raise awareness of and support researchers, so that they can contribute fully to resolving the great challenges of our time and inspire future generations."

**For Xing Qu, Deputy Director General of UNESCO:** "These last years have demonstrated more than ever the importance of science to address the serious challenges facing the world today."

<sup>1</sup>To be intelligent, the digital revolution must be inclusive, third chapter of UNESCO's Science Report : [La course contre la montre pour un développement plus intelligent](#)

<sup>2</sup> Source : Prix Nobel

*In order for science to be effective, it must be able to draw on the talents of all of us. UNESCO, as the agency of the United Nations with the specific mandate for science and which has made gender equality one of its global priorities, is determined to act to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls. The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Program is a perfect example of a partnership giving a voice and visibility to the outstanding work and research of many women scientists which addresses the challenges of our century. The 25<sup>th</sup> L'Oréal-UNESCO International Awards ceremony celebrates talented women who excel in scientific fields that are fundamental to all our futures."*

#### **About L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards**

The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards honors five distinguished women scientists each year for the excellence of their work and their outstanding careers – one for each of the following five regions: Africa and the Arab States; Asia and the Pacific; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; and North America. Each woman scientist has followed a unique journey combining an exceptional talent, a profound commitment to their profession and remarkable courage in a field still largely dominated by men.

The scientific disciplines for which the awards are given alternate between life and environmental sciences (even years) and physical science, mathematics and computer science (odd years).

#### **About Fondation L'Oréal**

The Fondation L'Oréal supports and empowers women to shape their future and make a difference in society, focusing on three major areas: scientific research and inclusive beauty and climate action.

Since 1998, the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science program has worked to empower more women scientists to overcome barriers to progression and participate in solving the great challenges of our time, for the benefit of all. For 25 years, it has supported more than 4,100 women researchers from over 110 countries, rewarding scientific excellence and inspiring younger generations of women to pursue science as a career.

Convinced that beauty contributes to the process of rebuilding lives, the Fondation L'Oréal helps vulnerable women to improve their self-esteem through free beauty and wellness treatments. It also enables underprivileged women to gain access to employment with dedicated vocational beauty training. On average, around 16,000 people have access to these free treatments every year and more than 35,000 people have taken part in professional beauty training, since the beginning of the program.

Finally, women are affected by persistent gender-based discrimination and inequalities, exacerbated by climate change. While they are on the frontline of the crisis, they remain under-represented in climate decision-making. The Women and Climate program of the Fondation L'Oréal supports, in particular, women who are developing climate action projects addressing the urgent climate crisis and raises awareness of the importance of gender-sensitive climate solutions.

#### **About UNESCO**

Since its creation in 1945, UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has worked to create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on respect for common values.

UNESCO's mission is to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through its unique expertise in education, science, culture, communication and information. The Organization has two global priorities: Africa and gender equality. UNESCO is the only UN specialized agency with a specific mandate in the sciences, symbolized by the «S» in its acronym.

Through its science-related programs, UNESCO contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, helps developing countries building their scientific and technological capacities, and supports Member States in their efforts to develop science policies and programs, as well as effective public policies that integrate local and indigenous knowledge systems.

UNESCO promotes scientific research and expertise in developing countries. The Organization leads several intergovernmental programs on sustainable management of freshwater, ocean and terrestrial resources, biodiversity conservation, and the use of science to address climate change and disaster risk reduction.

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