



L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Africa Regional programme

Sub-Saharan Africa Fellowship Ceremony Nairobi - December 6th, 2018

NAIROBI – 7th December, 2018: On December 6th, 2018, in Nairobi, Kenya, the L'Oréal Foundation awarded fellowships to 14 exceptional young women scientists conducting research in sub-Saharan Africa.

With the ninth ceremony of the L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science* regional programme on the African continent, the L'Oréal Foundation wishes to highlight its strong commitment to African female scientists and its ambition to contribute to the development of scientific excellence for women in Africa.

"The world needs science, and science needs women: nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in African countries, which face significant challenges including climate change, access to energy or food security. Science and technology are key to addressing these challenges, and this will not be possible without women. Their talents and perspectives enrich relevant research," says Alexandra Palt, Executive Vice President of the L'Oréal Foundation.

The L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science* Sub-Saharan Africa regional programme has grown significantly since its inception. *"After eight editions in South Africa, we decided to host our ceremony in Nairobi to reinforce our commitment to giving all Sub-Saharan African women scientists an opportunity"*, she concludes.

Palt announced in this framework that the program will be split into one local program focusing on South Africa and another one for the pan-African region in 2019. Additional and increased fellowships up to 20, will be provided to the pan-African program.

AN EXCEPTIONAL INITIATIVE TO EMPOWER 14 YOUNG AFRICAN RESEARCHERS

The 14 fellows – 12 doctoral and 2 post-doctoral – are drawn from five countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Mauritius, Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria). They were selected for the scientific excellence of their work from more than 480 applicants, by a jury of independent experts.

They gathered in Nairobi from December 4th in order to **benefit from a training programme that help strengthen their career**. The objective is to empower them to pursue their career and break the glass ceiling more easily. This three-day training course provided by international experts selected by the L'Oréal Foundation addresses different disciplines such as leadership development, management, negotiation, communication and public speaking, as well as modules such media training and personal digital branding.

These **14 brilliant young women researchers were awarded a research grant** at an exceptional ceremony and in front of a distinguished audience from all over the African continent, including representatives of public authorities and UNESCO, scientists, academics, intellectuals, thought leaders and organisations promoting gender equality.

Finally, the fellows will benefit from **a major communications campaign on the African continent**, designed to promote and publicise their brilliance and raise public awareness. This entire initiative serves one goal: highlight scientific excellence of female researchers in sub-Saharan Africa, in order to create role models, encourage other young women to become scientists and empower women to shape the future of the continent.

WHO ARE THEY?

Olanike Akinduyite – Federal University of Technology, Nigeria

Specialty: Computer science

Title of project: Fingerprint-based key-binding biometric cryptosystem

Rima Beesoo – University of Mauritius, Mauritius

Specialty: Biology - Biochemistry

Title of project: Investigation of the biochemical characterisation, antioxidant, antimicrobial and anticarcinogenic potentials of some selected marine invertebrate species

Takalani Cele – UNISA, South Africa

Specialty: Environmental science - Condensed matter physics

Title of project: Platinum group metals (PGM) nano-particles & hybrid nano-composites by gamma radiolysis/EISA

Dr. Marilize Everts – University of Pretoria, South Africa

Specialty: Mechanical engineering - Fluid mechanics

Title of project: Heat transfer and pressure drop of high viscosity fluids in solar receiver tubes

Charlene Goosen – Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Specialty: Health sciences - Epidemiology

Title of project: Effect of oral iron supplementation on the gut microbiome in HIV-infected children

Lerato Hlaka – University of Cape Town, South Africa

Specialty: Health sciences - Infectious diseases

Title of project: Characterization of minor groove binders (MGBs) as novel lead compounds and the use of non-ionic surfactant vesicles (NIVs) to improve their efficacy for treatment of tuberculosis

Harshna Jivan – University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

Specialty: Physics - Nuclear physics

Title of project: Study on the influence of nuclear deformation on the pygmy dipole resonance in samarium isotopes

Dr. Priscilla Kolibea Mante – Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana

Specialty: Environmental science - Neuroscience

Title of project: Anticonvulsant activity of cryptolepine and its solid-lipid nanoparticles in the management of neurocysticercosis-induced epilepsy

Gladys Mosomtai – International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), Kenya

Specialty: Environmental science - Geoscience

Title of project: Influence of landscape dynamics, microclimate variability and agronomic practices in the coffee pathosystem of smallholder farms in Murang'a County, Kenya

Fiona Mumoki – University of Pretoria, Kenya

Specialty: Biology - Entomology

*Title of project: Role of brood pheromones in inhibiting dominance in *Apis mellifera capensis* reproductive parasites*

Shalena Naidoo – Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Specialty: Health sciences – Immunology - Virology

Title of project: Longitudinal perspective on the impact of immune Status on the HIV-1 latent reservoir and neurocognitive outcomes in virologically suppressed children

Olaperi Okuboyejo – University of Witwatersrand, Nigeria

Specialty: Computer science - Artificial intelligence

Title of project: Enhanced automatic feedback generation for the learning of regular expressions

Andrea Wilson – University of Pretoria, South Africa

Specialty: Biology - Genomics

*Title of project: Sexual reproduction in *Huntiella* species*

Madeliën Wooding – University of Pretoria, South Africa

Specialty: Chemistry - Health sciences

*Title of project: Chemical communication between the malaria carrying mosquito, *Anopheles arabiensis*, and its human host*

THE L'ORÉAL-UNESCO FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE PROGRAMME

Since its creation in 1998, the L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science* programme has supported and raised the profile of 3,100 women scientists. While women represent 28% of researchers today, the glass ceiling remains particularly persistent in the field of research: 89% of senior positions in research are held by men, and only 3% of Nobel scientific prizes have been awarded to women since the creation of this award.

Each year, this programme honors 5 international laureates, each representing a region of the world, as well as more than 290 young women researchers who benefit from a research and training grant.

In 2010, the L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science* partnership started the *For Women in Science* Regional Fellowships including the *L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Sub-Saharan Africa Fellowship* programme. The objective of the *Regional Fellowships* is to bring support to young women pursuing scientific careers in dozens of countries throughout the world where L'Oréal does not have a subsidiary. The Sub-Saharan Africa Fellowship programme covers 49 countries.

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About the L'Oréal Foundation

The L'Oréal Foundation works for the benefit of women around the world, supporting them and enabling them to achieve their goals in two major areas that sit at the heart of the Group's culture: scientific research and inclusive beauty.

Created in 1998 and led by the L'Oréal Foundation in partnership with UNESCO, the Women and Science Programme aims to improve the representation of women in scientific careers, based on the conviction that the world needs science, and science needs women. Over 20 years, the programme has supported and raised the profile of more than 3,100 researchers from 117 countries.

Convinced that beauty is central to the process of personal development and a vector of social inclusion, the L'Oréal Foundation also develops free training excellence courses in beauty care for vulnerable people. It also provides access to beauty and wellbeing services in medical and social settings to help people suffering from physical, mental or social issues, and for patients who have undergone reconstructive surgery.