



2019 Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Awards L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme: 20 women researchers awarded

Dakar, November 22nd, 2019 – Yesterday in Dakar, as part of the 10th edition of its regional programme *For Women in Science*, the Fondation L'Oréal, alongside UNESCO, held a Ceremony honoring 20 female researchers who received the 2019 Young Talents Awards for Sub-Saharan Africa.

"The number of women in Science is not yet significant: only 2.4%¹ of the world's researchers are African scientists, of whom 30% are women. Through the Young Talents Awards for Sub-Saharan Africa, we promote and support the continent's remarkable female researchers. They play a key role to develop inclusive research in Africa, for Africa and conducted by Africans", explains Alexandra Palt, Executive Vice-President of the Fondation L'Oréal.

A PRESTIGIOUS CEREMONY TO HIGHLIGHT BRIGHT FEMALE RESEARCHERS

Coming from 15 countries, these computer scientists, engineers or biologists, prove the diversity and crucial role of women's scientific research on the continent. They were awarded in front of a high-level audience from all over Africa. Mrs. Denise Nyakeru Tshisekedi, First Lady of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mr. Sheikh Oumar Anne, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation of Senegal, honored the event with their presence.

Other personalities attended the event: representatives of the scientific world and public authorities, Dimitri Sanga, Regional Director of UNESCO West Africa (Sahel), intellectuals, opinion leaders, organizations promoting gender equality - including Hafsat Abiola, President of Women in Africa - and influential women, such as the singer Coumba Gawlo Seck.

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THE HISTORICAL COMMITMENT OF THE FONDATION L'ORÉAL TO WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Created in 1998, the *For Women in Science* programme, led by the Fondation L'Oréal in partnership with UNESCO, aims to promote women in the field of scientific research, where the glass ceiling remains a reality. Over the past 21 years, more than 3,400 women researchers from 118 countries have been highlighted.



Through the regional Young Talents Sub-Saharan Africa Awards, the Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO have already supported 129 doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers, who are contributing through their work to building the continent's future. This year, this Sub-Saharan Africa programme is

celebrating its tenth anniversary. On this occasion, the Fondation L'Oréal and UNESCO

¹ Report on Science, UNESCO (2015)

strengthened their commitment and doubled the number of young women researchers awarded each year in Africa.

In 2019, in addition to the 7 women scientists awarded in South Africa, 15 doctoral candidates and 5 post-doctoral researchers from 15 sub-Saharan African countries, including 2 from Senegal, have been honored. They were selected for their scientific excellence out of nearly 400 applications.

The Young Talents received financial support for their scientific work, with allocations of €10,000 for doctoral students and €15,000 for post-doctoral students. These 20 researchers and the 7 scientists of the South African national programme have also benefited from a training designed to give them more resources to pursue their careers. This four-day training course, given by international experts selected by the Fondation L'Oréal, covered different dimensions: leadership, management, negotiation, public speaking, media training and personal branding.

THE 2019 SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA YOUNG TALENTS AWARDS

1 – Regina Esinam ABOTSI – Doctoral candidate – Ghana – University of Cape Town, South Africa

Discipline: Health Sciences

Research project: Determining antibiotic resistance in potentially pathogenic bacteria present in the respiratory tract of HIV-infected children.

2 – Becky Nancy ALOO – Doctoral candidate – Kenya – Laboratory, Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology, Arusha City, Tanzania

Discipline: Biological Sciences

Research project: Identifying novel species of Irish potato rhizobacteria to enhance yields.

3 – Fatoumata BA – Doctoral candidate – Senegal – Gaston Berger University of Saint-Louis

Discipline: Fundamental medicine

Research project: Studying sleep to better fight metabolic diseases.

4 – Dr. Mercy Temitope BANKOLE – Post-doctoral researcher – Nigeria – Federal University of Technology, Minna Niger State

Discipline: Chemistry

Research project: Healing open wounds faster and better thanks to a nanocomposite.

5 – Najah Fatou COLY – Doctoral candidate – Senegal – Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar

Discipline: Biological sciences

Research project: Better understanding infections during delivery to fight neonatal mortality

6 – Funmilola FAGBOLA – Doctoral candidate – Nigeria – Ladoke Akintola University of Technology

Discipline: Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering

Research project: Detecting misinformation with proof and deep learning models, and nature-inspired algorithms

7 – Dr. Nowsheen GOONOO – Post-doctoral researcher – Mauritius – Mauritius University, Moka

Discipline: Materials sciences

Research project: Avoiding amputations by enhancing healing in diabetic wounds

8 – Fatou JOOF – Doctoral candidate – The Gambia – Banjul Open University

Discipline: Biological Sciences

Research project: Developing new antimalarial strategies by tracking genetic mutations

9 – Ruth KIHKA – Doctoral candidate – Kenya – International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe), Nairobi Kenyatta University

Discipline: Chemistry

Research project: Identifying gene targets that correlate with biochemical pathways responsible for plant resistance to parasites

10 – Stéphanie Maubath Carène KONAN – Doctoral candidate – Côte d'Ivoire – Félix Houphouët Boigny University, Abidjan

Discipline: Informatics and Information Science

Research project: Geomatics at the service of the fight against malnutrition

11 – Carine KUNSEVI-KILOLA – Doctoral candidate – Democratic Republic of Congo – Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Discipline: Health Sciences

Research project: Combating tuberculosis contamination in diabetics

12 – Dr. Jacqueline KYOSIIMIRE-LUGEMWA – Post-doctoral researcher – MRC/UVRI & London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Uganda Research Unit, Uganda

Discipline: Health Sciences

Research project: Generating comprehensive data on the pre-existing immune status and its effect on vaccine response.

13 – Dr. Henintsoa Onivola MINOARIVELO – Post-doctoral researcher – Madagascar – Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Discipline: Mathematics

Research project: Using mathematical modelling and computational simulations to predict the fate of insect pollinators.

14 – Celia MOFFAT JOEL MATYANGA – Doctoral candidate – Zimbabwe – Zimbabwe University, Harare

Discipline: Fundamental Medicine

Research project: Using the interactions between a herbal traditional medicine and first line treatment of hiv/aids

15 – Mweete NGLAZI – Doctoral candidate – Zambia – University of Cape Town, South Africa

Discipline: Health Sciences

Research project: An analysis of overweight and obesity in South Africa: the case of women of childbearing age

16 – Ines NGOH – Doctoral candidate – Cameroon – Buea University et London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Gambian Research Unit, Gambia

Discipline: Biological sciences

Research project: Understanding genetic variations, used by natural populations of malaria parasites

17 – Georgina NYAWO – Doctoral candidate – Zimbabwe – Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Discipline: Health sciences

Research project: - Assessing the microbiome in patients with tuberculosis to develop novel diagnostic interventions and therapeutic

18 – Dr. Cécile Harmonie OTOIDOBIGA – Post-doctoral researcher – Burkina Faso – Ouagadougou Joseph Ki-Zerbo University

Discipline: Biological Sciences

Research project: Improving productivity of lowland rice in West Africa

19 – Francine TANKEU – Doctoral candidate – Cameroon – Yaoundé 1 University

Discipline: Biological Sciences

Research project: Treating leukemia by allying biochemistry to the power of plants

20 – Jesugnon Fifamè Murielle Féty TONOUEWA – Doctoral candidate – Benin – Parakou University

Discipline: Environmental Engineering

Research project: Improving the Acacia wood supply chain in Benin

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About the Fondation L'Oréal

The Fondation L'Oréal 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 Fondation L'Oréal in partnership with UNESCO, the *For Women in 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 3,400 researchers from 118 countries.

Convinced that beauty is central to the process of personal development and a vector of social inclusion, the Fondation L'Oréal 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.

About UNESCO

Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization supports international scientific cooperation as a catalyst for sustainable development and for peace between people.

UNESCO assists countries in the development of their public policies and in building their capabilities in the fields of science, technology, innovation and scientific education.

In addition, UNESCO leads several intergovernmental programmes for the sustainable management of freshwater, ocean and terrestrial resources, for biodiversity protection and to promote science's role in combating climate change and natural disasters.

To meet these goals, UNESCO is committed to ending discrimination of all kinds and to promoting equality between women and men.