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UNESCO and cosmetics giant L'Oréal honour five outstanding women scientists



9 November 2010 – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) and cosmetics manufacturer L'Oréal today [announced](#) the names of five outstanding women scientists who will be honoured for their research and the impact of their work on society.

The awards ceremony will take place on 3 March next year at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Each of the five laureates will receive \$100,000 in recognition of her contribution to science.

Faiza Al-Kharafi, professor of chemistry at Kuwait University will be honoured for her work on corrosion, a problem of fundamental importance to water treatment and the oil industry.

Vivian Wing-Wah Yam, professor of chemistry and energy at the University of Hong Kong will be recognized for her work on light-emitting materials and innovative ways of capturing solar energy.

Anne L'huillier, who teaches atomic physics at Lund University in Sweden, will receive recognition for research on the development of the fastest camera for recording events in attoseconds – a billionth of a billionth of a second.

Professor Emeritus Silvia Torres-Peimbert of the Institute of Astronomy at Mexico City University will receive the award for her work on the chemical composition of nebulae, which is fundamental to the understanding of the origin of the universe.

Jillian Banfield, professor of Earth and Planetary Science, Environmental Science, Policy and Management, and Materials Science and Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, will be honoured for her research on bacterial and material behaviour under extreme conditions relevant to the environment and the Earth.

More than 1,000 scientists from around the world took part in the nomination of candidates for the awards.

The International Awards Jury, comprised of 16 eminent members of the scientific community, and presided by Professor Ahmed Zewail, recipient of the 1999 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, then selected the five women researchers in the Physical Sciences as the Laureates of the 2011 awards. Their pioneering projects contribute to finding solutions to major challenges for the planet.

“It is a great pleasure for me to chair this jury and to promote this programme, which is of major international importance,” said Professor Ahmed. “The women scientists from all over the world who are receiving the L’Oréal-UNESCO Awards make it possible for us to hope for a better future,” he added.

With the centenary of Marie Curie – Nobel laureate for physics and the first female professor at the University of Paris – being celebrated in 2011, this year’s awards have special significance, say L’Oréal and UNESCO, which joined forces 13 years ago to support the cause of women in science.

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