



THE WORLD NEEDS SCIENCE AND SCIENCE NEEDS WOMEN: THE FIRST “L’ORÉAL UK FELLOWSHIPS FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE” ARE AWARDED

6th July 2007 – Last night, L’Oréal announced the winners of the first UK Fellowships For Women In Science. At a ceremony in central London, four outstanding female scientists were awarded fellowships of £10,000 to further their research careers.

Designed to promote the vital importance of ensuring greater participation of women in science, the awards are run in partnership with the UK National Commission for UNESCO, the Royal Institution of Great Britain and the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology.

Women are still critically underrepresented in science professions, making up only 19% of the UK’s total science, engineering and technology (SET) workforce¹. Within the upper levels of science, women constitute an even greater minority, holding just 6% of professorships².

Baroness Susan Greenfield, the first female Director of the Royal Institution and chair of the L’Oréal For Women In Science jury panel commented:

“We are entering an era where science and technology are at the centre of society. We need the brightest and the best to tackle some of the biggest problems that face society, not least pressing environmental and medical challenges.

“It’s crazy to eliminate 50% of the talent. It’s also crazy to invest in educating and training people and then ignore them and their talent in later life.”

It is estimated that approximately 50,000 women with SET qualifications are not working in these sectors³. Many women leave each year, often due to maternity leave, and do not return to pursue a career in science.

¹ <http://www.setwomenresource.org.uk/>

² HESA, 2007

³ Maximising Returns, DTI, 2002

In view of this, the L'Oréal fellowships have been designed to be totally flexible. Winners may choose to spend their fellowship award on paying for childcare costs, or buying an assistant's time – whatever enables them to continue with their research in a way that suits them.

Sophie Gasperment, L'Oréal UK Managing Director, said last night:

“Tonight's event was incredibly inspiring for everyone involved. I'm delighted that, in conjunction with our partners, we are able to help further the careers of some exceptional young female scientists and raise awareness of this crucial issue.”

More information is available at www.forwomeninscience.com.

Ends

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Notes to Editors:

Winners of the 2007 L'Oréal UK For Women In Science Fellowships:

Dr Theresa Burt de Perera, to undertake research at Department of Zoology, University of Oxford

- There is a widely held belief that fish have little or no cognitive capacity. Dr Theresa Burt de Perera's research challenges this view, proving that the ability to learn about and recognise their environment is fundamental in order to help fish survive.

Dr Seirian Sumner, to undertake research at Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London

- Dr Seirian Sumner is interested in the origins of sociality. Her work is focused on the simplest insect societies which help reveal the key processes involved in the early stages of social evolution.

Dr Araxi Urrutia Odabachian, to undertake research at Institute of Medical Genetics, Cardiff University

- Dr Araxi Urrutia Odabachian, a previous winner of the L'Oréal Graduate of the Year competition, is a researcher in the field of Human Genetics. Her results have to date proven that genes are not ordered randomly as was previously thought, but rather that genes are sorted according to their levels of activity.

Winner of the L'Oréal/UKRC For Women In Science 'Woman Returner' Fellowship:

Dr Anna Git, to undertake research at Cancer Research UK, Cambridge Research Institute

- Early diagnosis is of paramount importance for the treatment of cancer. Dr Anna Git, is working at the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Research Institute (at the University of Cambridge) to study the antibodies, produced by the body, which are the earlier known indicators of cancer. She works on methods to more quickly identify these antibodies and she is also evaluating which are the best clinical markers for routine cancer testing.

UK Jury Panel:

The jury panel is chaired by Baroness Susan Greenfield CBE, Director of The Royal Institution and includes:

- Professor Alec Boksenberg CBE FRS, Chair, UK National Commission for UNESCO
- Professor Malcolm Grant CBE MA LLD, President and Provost, UCL
- Dr Nancy Lane OBE, Director, WiSETI
- Dame Anne McLaren DBE FRS, Cambridge University (L'Oréal UNESCO Award Winner in 2001)
- Julie McManus, Assistant Scientific Director, L'Oréal UK
- Professor John O'Reilly, Vice-Chancellor, Cranfield University
- Dr Raniero De Stasio, Scientific Director, L'Oréal UK
- Phil Willis MP, Chairman, House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee

The L'Oréal UNESCO For Women in Science programme

In partnership with UNESCO, the company launched a unique global programme in 1998 to promote, enhance and encourage the role of women in science at all levels. The L'Oréal – UNESCO For Women in Science programme has since recognised 152 women scientists from 59 countries for excellence in research or received encouragement to pursue their careers, including 2 British Laureates.

In parallel, L'Oréal has also established a programme of national initiatives to address the country-specific issues surrounding the status of women in science. Today, 22 countries run national initiatives.

L'Oréal

L'Oréal is the world's number one cosmetics company, present in over 130 countries with 52,000 employees world-wide and a turnover of 15.8 billion euros in 2006, an annual increase of 8.7%. L'Oréal is the only cosmetics group that is present in every distribution channel: mass market, hair salons, department stores and pharmacy. Its brand portfolio includes L'Oréal Paris, Garnier, Maybelline, Soft Sheen Carson, Matrix, Redken, L'Oréal Professionnel, Kérastase, Vichy, La Roche-Posay, Lancôme, Biotherm, Kiehl's, Shu Uemura and Armani, Cacharel and Ralph Lauren fragrances. The company acquired The Body Shop in 2006.

The company has been present in the UK for more than 70 years. Today L'Oréal UK is the fourth largest subsidiary of L'Oréal in Europe and the fifth world-wide. L'Oréal UK is a major player in the UK cosmetics market, with an annual turnover of £626 million in 2006. 67% of women in the UK use one or more L'Oréal product. Overall, L'Oréal employs over 2,500 people in the UK who work across five sites including: a manufacturing and distribution centre in Llantrisant, South Wales; two distribution centres in Manchester; a centre in Nottingham and the headquarters in Hammersmith.

UK National Commission for UNESCO

The UK National Commission for UNESCO (www.unesco.org.uk) is an independent body re-established by HM Government in 2004. It acts as a national coordinating body for the engagement of the UK civil society (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) in UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; www.unesco.org) global activities in education, sciences, culture and communication.

The UK National Commission works in partnership with both HM Government and UK civil society to provide expert advice for the Government on UNESCO related matters, develop UK input to UNESCO policy-making, promote reforms within UNESCO, and encourage support in the UK for UNESCO's ideals and work.

Since its creation in 1945, UNESCO has been dedicated to eliminating all forms of discrimination and promoting gender equality. While designing formal and non formal science education programmes specifically for girls, UNESCO has set up a series of networks linking women scientists around the world. The Organization is also developing new indicators to measure women's access to scientific training and to help develop appropriate policies in its 192 Member States.

The Royal Institution of Great Britain (Ri)

Since the Ri was established over 200 years ago, it has supported 14 resident scientists who have received the Nobel Prize and witnessed the discovery of 10 of the chemical elements of the Periodic Table as well as numerous inventions for the public and private sector.

During these two centuries the Ri has hosted famous scientists such as Humphry Davy, Michael Faraday, James Dewar and William and Lawrence Bragg who all based their innovative and groundbreaking work at the Ri. The discoveries of these scientists still impact our daily lives such as the electric generator, the miner's safety lamp and the atomic structure of crystals.

The Ri has always provided open public debate and education about science and scientific issues for people of all ages through its year-round, high-calibre events that break down the barriers between science and society.

The Public and Young Person's Events Programmes of the Ri deliver independent science-based discussion on an issue where community interest lies. This has included such varied topics as climate change, cutting edge discovery in combating serious illness such as Leukaemia and Alzheimer's and the 'The Life Cycle of a Diamond'.

The Ri also has a 6 star (the highest) rated research facility, The Davy Faraday Research Laboratory. This Laboratory is at the forefront of current solid-state science, with a broad programme of experimental and computational studies of the chemistry and physics of complex materials.

About UK Resource Centre in Science, Engineering and Technology

Established in 2004 to support the Government's ten-year strategy for Science and Innovation, the UKRC works to improve the participation and position of women in SET across industry, academia and public services in the UK. Funded by the DIUS, it provides advice and consultancy on gender equality to employers in industry and academia, professional institutes, education and Research Councils. The UKRC also helps women entering into and progressing within SET careers, through advice and support at all career stages, training, mentoring and networking opportunities.

The under-representation of women and loss of qualified women in Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) is a national issue contributing to the continued skills gap. It is crucial to ensure that the UK has the right stock and flow of skilled scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians, as well as technicians and other R&D support staff, generated from within the UK to ensure the UK's future competitiveness.

For further information, please see www.setwomenresource.org.uk