11 Women Scientists Announced As Winners Of Elsevier Foundation OWSD Awards

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Kuala Lumpur, September 29, 2011 - The Elsevier Foundation, TWAS, the academy of sciences for the developing world and the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) announced today that they are recognizing eleven talented women scientists from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean for their research excellence. The announcement was made at the International Symposium on Women in Science and Engineering (WISE 2011) held in conjunction with the International Year of Chemistry 2011 and hosted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, and Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM) in Kuala Lumpur from September 29-30. Each winner will receive a cash prize of US$5,000.

"Once again, the standard of the winners selected for the OWSD Awards for Young Women Scientists from the Developing World has been outstanding. For us, this is not a surprise, as we are well aware of the excellent contributions that women are making to science," noted Professor Fang Xin, President of OWSD. "The aim of the OWSD Awards, therefore, is to honor the work of these young researchers, bringing it to the attention of the scientific and policy-making communities in their countries, and to highlight their successes so that they may act as role models to other girls and young women who might be considering a career in science."

Lubna Tahtamoouni, winner from The Hashemite University in Jordan said, "Over the years I came to recognize that it is difficult for women to do science since they have to juggle their career, marriage, motherhood and other social obligations. Winning such an award made me more confident about my decision of pursuing a career in science. Women need recognition, especially young women to give them that 'head start' and confidence. This award is celebrating women!"

Denise Evans, biological sciences winner from South Africa added, "It is important to highlight that women, even from developing countries, are doing great things - making breakthroughs, contributing to advances in medicine, science, chemistry and engineering - becoming leaders and experts in their field. It is important to acknowledge young scientists so that they may be motivated from an early age to stay in science and develop a career in science and research."

Through a grant from the Elsevier Foundation, the OWSD Awards for Young Women Scientists from the Developing World were expanded to cover three disciplines in each region - Biology, Chemistry, and Physics/Maths. The grant was made as part of the Elsevier Foundation New Scholars program, which supports programs for women scholars during the early stages of demanding careers in science and technology. After a rigorous review by the four regional OWSD committees, shortlisted candidates in each discipline were nominated and subsequently ranked

by the regional vice presidents and Professor Fang Xin, the current OWSD president. The eleven winners include:

- Biological Sciences; BEGUM, Mahfuza; Bangladesh Agricultural University
- Phys/Maths; MOHANTA, Rukmani; University of Hyderabad, India
- Chemical Science; SHAHEEN, Farzana; University of Karachi, Pakistan
- Phys/Maths; ADERMOLA, Janet Ayobami; University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Chemical Sciences; OSOWOLE, Aderoju Amoke; University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Biological Sciences; EVANS, Denise; University of the Witwatersrand, S. Africa
- Chemical Sciences; ISMAIL, Nahla; National Research Centre, India
- Biological Sciences; TAHTAMOUNI, Lubna; The Hashemite University, Jordan
- Phys/Maths; GONZALEZ SANCHEZ, Maria Magdalena; Instituto de Astronomia, Mexico
- Biological Sciences; HERMIDA CRUZ, Lisset; Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Cuba
- Phys/Maths; Silvina, PELLEGRINET; Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Argentina

Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Minister for Women, Family and Community Development in Malaysia says, "It is an honor for Kuala Lumpur to host such an award. Malaysia is and always will be committed to advancing women in science. The strength of our nation depends on empowering our women, and enabling them to believe that they are every bit as capable of succeeding in science as men. We are very pleased that the OWSD and the Elsevier Foundation share this vision and show us through their innovative programs that when women are given the right support, their capacity to succeed is limitless."

"We are proud to present the OWSD award to eleven extremely gifted young women working in different areas of science," noted Prof. Dr. Farida Habib Shah, Vice President of the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World, TWAS fellow and WISE 2011 conference organizer. "This award provides them with the recognition they deserve and a very special thanks must go to the Elsevier Foundation for making this possible. This award serves as a boost not only to their personal careers but also to the thousands of young women working in science across developing countries."

"We know from experience how important it is to fight the steady loss of talented women in science caused through lack of support during critical family building years, lack of networking opportunities and mentorship-or simply a lack of recognition and opportunities," David Ruth, Executive Director for the Elsevier Foundation, remarked. "Congratulations are in order to our eleven winners and the excellent research they have undertaken over the past years. Each of these scientists represents a powerful role model to colleagues and the next generation of women scientists in the developing world."

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