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In Paris, some of the world's brightest scientific minds have been lauded for their ground-breaking research. Five women from around the world singled out for the L'Oreal UNESCO Women in Science Awards. They're being recognized for their individual contributions to medicine, agriculture and the environment.

Among their number, China's Hualan Chen, for her life-saving work on the lethal bird flu virus. This ultimately led to the development and use of an effective vaccine.

Tributes to a lifetime achievement. The work of China's Hualen Chen in the field of bird flu virus makes her an extraordinary lifesaver and this year a laureate of the world science community. Taking her place in a pantheon of acclaimed women scientists at the 'L'Oreal UNESCO' awards, a moment of pride.

"By getting this award that means my contribution to science has been recognized in a higher level. So, that's why I think this is important to me, it means a lot," said Prof. Hualan Chen, L'Oreal UNESCO Award winner.

Hualan Chen is based in northeastern China's Harbin City, famous around the world for its magical ice palaces. It was here at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences that Hualan Chen undertook her quite literally groundbreaking work, testing over a thousand samples of soil and water from areas infected by the deadly bird flu virus H7N9.

Critical research that culminated in her developing two innovative new flu vaccines, 114 billion doses of which saved lives across China and South East Asia.

"My goal is to use my knowledge and my expertise to try to protect animals and humans from this deadly virus and it will be very, very lucky if we can eliminate this virus in the near or far future," said Chen.

Hualan Chen was judged by a jury of her scientific peers, who found her work to be world class.

"In China she's done absolutely groundbreaking work in something that's so important: understanding the avian influenzas and what it can do, but very importantly what that impact can be on humans," said Prof. Elizabeth Blackburn, president of L'Oreal UNESCO Jury.

For nearly two decades, women from around the world have been hailed here in Paris for their contribution to life saving science and in the process, according to the organizers of the awards, thousands of young girls have followed in the footsteps of their heroines choosing a lifetime in science.