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UCT CONFERS HONORARY DEGREE ON LEADING HIV/AIDS SCIENTIST

UKZN Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research Professor Salim Abdool Karim was awarded an honorary degree in Doctor of Science in Medicine from the University of Cape Town today in recognition of the international impact of his groundbreaking research on the fight against HIV/AIDS. A media statement released by UCT reads as follows: 'His work epitomises the momentous contribution that innovative multidisciplinary science and medical technology can make to disease prevention, treatment and global health. Professor Abdool Karim's highest-impact scientific discovery was the effect of tenofovir gel, as a microbicide, in preventing both HIV and genital herpes. This landmark study, which he co-led with his wife, provided the first evidence that antiretroviral drugs can prevent sexual transmission of HIV infection'. He is Director of the Centre for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA).

Professor Abdool Karim's contributions to microbicides for HIV prevention spans two decades and culminated in the CAPRISA 004 tenofovir gel trial which provided proof-of-concept that antiretroviral drugs can prevent sexually transmitted HIV infection and herpes simplex virus type 2 in women. He is co-inventor on patents which have been used in several HIV vaccine candidates and his clinical research on TB-HIV treatment has shaped international guidelines on the clinical management of co-infected patients.

He is the recipient of "TWAS Prize in Medical Sciences" from The World Academy of Sciences, the "Olusegun Obasanjo Prize" from the African Academy of Sciences, the Gold Medal Award from the Academy of Science in South Africa and the John F. W. Herschel Medal from the Royal Society of South Africa.

He is Chair of the UNAIDS Scientific Expert Panel, as well as a Member of the PEPfAR Scientific Advisory Board, the Scientific Advisory Board for Global Health of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV. He is an elected Fellow of the World Academy of Sciences, the African Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Science in South Africa and the American Academy of Microbiology. He is a Foreign Associate Member of the Institute of Medicine.

He is also Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, Adjunct Professor of Medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University and Associate Member of The Ragon Institute of Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University.

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