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### Rita Colwell to Leave National Science Foundation

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**ARLINGTON, VA** — National Science Foundation Director Rita R. Colwell will assume the position of Chairman of Canon U.S. Life Sciences, Inc. upon her retirement from the Foundation, effective Feb. 21. Arden L. Bement Jr., the director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, will take over as interim NSF director.

Canon U.S. Life Sciences is a newly created, Washington-based subsidiary of Canon U.S.A., Inc. whose goal is to identify and develop life-science solutions with potential applications in diagnostics and medical instrumentation.

Colwell, a microbiologist and internationally recognized expert on cholera and other infectious diseases, will also serve as Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, and on the faculty of The John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where she will help develop a new international center for the study of infectious diseases, water, and health in conjunction with scientific colleagues from Sweden, Norway, Japan, and Bangladesh.

"I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to lead NSF through two administrations and major transformational changes," Colwell said. "During the past five and a half years, our budget has increased by 68 percent, our merit review system has been recognized throughout government as the gold standard for responsible use of public funds, and our programs have helped U.S. science and engineering evolve into the flexible, robust and diverse endeavors that they must become to keep America preeminent at the frontier of research and education."

Among the highlights of her tenure, Colwell championed increases in grant size,

which rose from an annual average of \$90,000 in 1998 to \$142,000 at present, and promoted innovative collaborations across traditional disciplines such as biocomplexity in the environment, nanoscale science and engineering, bioinformatics and information technology.

In addition, she initiated programs to increase NSF's investment in mathematics and to integrate mathematics with the life and social sciences, urged and obtained substantial increases in graduate-student stipends, and called for expanded opportunities for minorities and women in the nation's science and engineering communities.

Colwell, the third-longest-serving director in NSF's 54-year history, also created a program to place promising science and engineering graduate students directly in K-12 classrooms. In the highly successful and widely praised "GK-12" program, school children benefit from the energy and enthusiasm of the graduate students, and the graduate students learn first-hand the challenges involved in science and math education.

During Colwell's term, NSF received the highest achievement ratings of any federal agency in performance on the President's Management Agenda and was named a "model" agency by the White House.

Colwell took office in August of 1998. Previously, she held many advisory positions in the U.S. government, nonprofit science policy organizations, and private foundations, as well as in the international scientific research community. She has authored or co-authored 16 books and more than 600 scientific publications. She produced the award-winning film, *Invisible Seas*, and has served on editorial boards of numerous scientific journals.

She is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees, including the Medal of Distinction from Columbia University, the Gold Medal of Charles University, Prague, the UCLA Medal from the University of California, Los Angeles, and the Alumna Summa Laude Dignata from the University of Washington, Seattle.

Colwell has previously served as chairman of the Board of Governors of the American Academy of Microbiology and also as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Washington Academy of Sciences, the American Society for Microbiology, the Sigma Xi National Science Honorary Society, and the International Union of Microbiological Societies. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and The American Philosophical Society.

Born in Beverly, Massachusetts, Colwell holds a B.S. in bacteriology and an M.S. in genetics, from Purdue University, and a Ph.D. in oceanography from the University of Washington.

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