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Lausanne, the 27th of September 2018

Concern : Ms Riddhima Banga's application for the CROI 2019 New Investigator scholarship

To whom it may concern,

Ms Riddhima Banga performed a Master's Degree in 2012 in Integrated Immunology at University of Oxford (UK) under the supervision of Dr. Nilu Goonetilleke in the laboratory of Prof. Andrew McMichael on the evaluation of the breadth and magnitude of HIV-specific CD8 T-cell responses in HIV-1 controllers.

Soon after her graduation Ms Banga joined my laboratory at the Division of Immunology and Allergy, Lausanne University Hospital, Lausanne, Switzerland in March 2013 to start her PhD and is therefore working with me for more than 5 years.

Ms Banga rapidly acquired the most modern technologies in cellular immunology and virology and applied these techniques to investigate the distribution of HIV-1 infected CD4 T cells containing replication competent and infectious virus within memory CD4 T-cell subsets including T follicular helper T cells isolated from blood and lymph nodes of long-term treated aviremic HIV-1 infected individuals.

I am profoundly impressed by Ms Banga's motivation, technical skills, knowledge of the literature and creativity. Ms Banga already published four main articles in *Journal of Virology*, 2015, in *Current Opinion in HIV and AIDS*, 2016, in *Nature Medicine*, 2016 and in *Frontiers of Immunology*, 2018 in first author position. Ms Banga has also received two major Swiss prizes in 2018 *i.e.* the Pfizer prize in Infectiology, Rheumatology and Immunology and the Lausanne University prize of excellence, which have acknowledged the exceptional quality of her Phd.

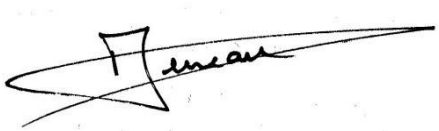
Ms. Banga obtained her PhD in August 2017 from Lausanne University (UNIL), Lausanne, Switzerland and stayed in my laboratory as post-doctoral fellow. Ms Banga now focuses on the immunological and virological parameters associated with viral persistence in ART treated HIV-infected individuals and is in this context, submitting an abstract (**#2886**) entitled "PD-1/PD-L1 Interaction Regulates HIV Transcription in Lymph Nodes of Treated Subjects" to the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) 2019 as first and presenting author and is planning to attend the entire conference. Ms Banga's email address is Riddhima.Banga@chuv.ch.

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Ms Banga has an enthusiastic personality, which enables her to integrate very rapidly into a team. Ms Banga is able to lead scientific debates, present her ideas in seminar and expose her results in a scientific congress. Ms Banga has also the capacity to listen and understand criticism, which enables her to progress very rapidly.

Ms Banga definitively falls into the top young scientists I have had the opportunity to collaborate with during my career. It is therefore with no hesitation that I strongly support Ms Banga's application for the CROI 2019, New Investigator scholarship.

Best regards,



Prof. Matthieu Perreau, PhD
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