Marilda Siqueira's Testimony

"I am Marilda Siqueira, a virologist and head of the Respiratory Virus and Measles Laboratory of the Oswaldo Cruz Institute. The actuation of our laboratory started to do research and perform the diagnosis for confronting COVID-19 that began since the announcement by WHO; as coronavirus was causing pneumonia in China. Our immediate concern was to prepare a network of Ministry of Health laboratories so that the "SUS" (unified Brazilian healthcare System) could deal with the arrival of SARS-CoV-2.

Then, we dedicated ourselves to standardizing protocols, jointly with Bio-Manguinhos, and prepared a kit that would make laboratories available to public healthcare throughout our country. This development made it possible to train our entire laboratory network to utilize the diagnostic kit for making diagnoses by the middle of March. It was necessary to multiply this know-how and thereby, also train other Latin American laboratories.

Our laboratory was designated as a reference in COVID-19 in Latin America by WHO. We are also the curators of the WHO genomic data. These were recognitions for our diagnostic- related work and genetic sequencing, as well and also the scientific research we have been performing in diverse studies by our team; as they are participating in research work and groups in Brazil, as well as in other countries. We also receive clinical samples from other countries that are still not able to perform the genetic sequencing process as our country is a benchmark for the Americas. And we participate in WHO committees and work groups discussing diverse aspects on the pandemic.

The purpose has always been to contribute to expanding knowledge on COVID-19 and improve the strategies for confronting it. All this is getting down with intense cooperation from the Ministry of Health, WHO, the Fiocruz laboratories, and research institutions from Brazil and other countries."

This testimony is part of the "Coronacene Exhibit – Reflections in Times of Pandemic" exhibit held by the Museum of Tomorrow.

Museu do **Amanhã**