For immediate release

**Leica Microsystems Donate an Advanced Microscopy System to Charité’s Institute of Virology to Progress Covid-19 Research**

Wetzlar and Berlin, May 2020. — Leica Microsystems is pleased to announce the donation of a THUNDER 3D Live Cell imaging system to the Institute of Virology of Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin..

Since the start of the current coronavirus outbreak, the Institute of Virology on Campus Charité Mitte, led by Director Prof. Dr. Christian Drosten, has been at the forefront of viral research into SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19.

This new advanced microscopy system will be used by several working groups headed up by PD Dr. Marcel Müller, Dr. Daniela Niemeyer and Prof. Dr. Christine Goffinet. All three groups are working together to help develop clinical strategies to treat the disease, by investigating how the virus enters cells, what exactly happens when human respiratory cells are infected, and how antiviral drug candidates would work.

The donated THUNDER Imager brings two key benefits to the researchers; it will deliver faster results and make the analysis of images easier, uncovering more information about the structural detail of the studied cells. The Leica team will help the Institute of Virology to become proficient with the new system as quickly as possible and ensure optimal results. This marks the beginning of a longer-term relationship between the two parties for the benefit of viral research.

The head of the Institute of Virology, Prof. Dr. Christian Drosten, is an expert in the diagnosis of infections due to coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS. Prof. Dr. Drosten co-discovered the first SARS-CoV and developed the PCR-based test for SARS-CoV-2.

On the donation of the THUNDER Imager, **Prof. Dr. Drosten** stated, “We are pleased to be given the opportunity to work with the THUNDER Imager. Its capabilities give us the possibility to understand the development of virulence over the course of the epidemic and the potential to develop high-throughput and sensitive serological tests for SARS-CoV-2 immunity. During this critical time, it is of paramount importance that we work together, both to combat this pandemic and to arm ourselves effectively for the future. It is great to partner with Leica Microsystems on this and we look forward to working with this new microscopy technology.”

**Markus Lusser, President of Leica Microsystems, commented**, “Leica Microsystems is proud to support the Charité‘s work in the fight against COVID 19. The THUNDER imager we have provided is particularly suited to imaging live cells in 3D disease models, helping to uncover their true physiology. Helping scientists learn more about Covid-19 will benefit the global community, helping us to stay healthy and fight this disease as we rebuild our economy after this pandemic.”

**Ends**

**Image caption**

*Charite\_Virology\_Drosten\_Leica\_THUNDER\_Imager.jpg*

The head of Charité’s Institute of Virology on Campus Charité Mitte, Prof. Dr. Christian Drosten, at the laboratory workplace with the THUNDER Imager 3D Live Cell from Leica Microsystems.

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About the THUNDER Imagers**

The THUNDER IMAGER 3D Live Cell is a new advanced microscopy imaging system that gives a clear view of details, even deep within an intact sample, in real time\* without out-of-focus blur. Featuring the innovative Leica technology Computational Clearing, THUNDER Imagers are ideally suited for imaging 3D cell culture assays, stem cells, spheroids, or organoids

\*in accordance with ISO/IEC 2382:2015

**About the Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin and the Institute of Virology**

Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin is one of the largest university hospitals in Europe, boasting approximately 100 departments and institutes spread across 4 separate campuses. With approximately 18,000 members of staff employed across its group of companies, Charité is one of the largest employers in Berlin. The Institute of Virology is the scientific center for corona virus research in Germany. The head of the Institute of Virology, Prof. Dr. Christian Drosten is co-discoverer of the first SARS-CoV that first appeared in 2002.

**About Leica Microsystems**

Leica Microsystems develops and manufactures microscopes and scientific instruments for the analysis of microstructures and nanostructures. Ever since the company started as a family business in the nineteenth century, its instruments have been widely recognized for their optical precision and innovative technology. It is one of the market leaders in compound and stereo microscopy, digital microscopy, confocal laser scanning microscopy with related imaging systems, electron microscopy sample preparation, and surgical microscopes.

Find out more at www.leica-microsystems.com