

Press release

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Future Policy Award crowns world's best forest policies

Forest laws and policies in Rwanda, The Gambia and the US beat out 17 other nominees to win 2011 Future Policy Award

New York, 21 September 2011. Rwanda's National Forest Policy was proclaimed the winner of the 2011 Future Policy Award. The Gambia's Community Forest Policy and the US Lacey Act with its amendment of 2008 received the Silver Awards. The three winning policies which most effectively contribute to the conservation and sustainable development of forests for the benefit of current and future generations were announced on 21 September 2011 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The announcement will be followed by an awards ceremony at the Central Park Zoo convened by the World Future Council, the Secretariats of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Forest Stewardship Council, and hosted at the Wildlife Conservation Society.

"Exemplary policy solutions do exist. The Future Policy Award celebrates the best of them. The aim of the award is to raise global awareness for these policies and speed up policy action. We need visionary policies which support a sustainable and just world and protect future generations," says Alexandra Wandel, Director of the World Future Council, an international policy research organisation that provides decision-makers with effective policy solutions. The 2011 Future Policy Award shines a spotlight on the success stories and challenges faced by the world's forests and the people who depend on them.

"Rwanda has sought not only to make its forests a national priority, but has also used them as a platform to revolutionise its stances on women's rights and creating a healthy environment," says Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Honorary World Future Councillor and Founder of the Green Belt Movement.

Despite continuing population and land pressures, Rwanda is on course to reach its goal of increasing forest cover to 30% of total land area achieving a major reversal in the trend of declining forest cover. Forest cover has already increased by 37% since 1990. Massive reforestation and planting activities that promoted indigenous species and involved the local population were undertaken, and new measures such as agro-forestry and education about forest management were implemented. Rwanda has also been a pioneer in banning plastic bags: in 2008 a bill was introduced to prohibit the manufacture, import, use and sale of polythene bags in the country.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Honorary World Future Councillor visited Rwanda in February this year together with Goodwill Ambassador Edward Norton and states: "Rwanda is an inspiration for the world. The national policy to heal and restore nature, through a border-to-border restoration programme, will create the basis for a healthy and resilient society of the future. This policy is placing Rwanda firmly on the map as a global environmental leader, and I hope many other countries will follow."

The first Silver Award went to The Gambia's Community Forest Policy, which has achieved sustainable forest management and poverty alleviation by handing control of forests to the communities that use them.

Eduardo Rojas Briales, Assistant Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, states: "The success of the Gambia's Community Forest Policy proves that even in the world's poorest countries, with the right policies and adequate legislation in place rural populations can



benefit economically and significantly improve their food security. In Gambia the innovative policy included forest tenure transition from state ownership to management by local communities, which enabled them to reduce illegal logging and benefit from using the forest products. It is vital to acknowledge such achievements and draw the attention of policy-makers around the globe to possible solutions which could be applied in other countries in the future.”

Ecological gains from forest protection include an increase in climate change mitigation through a decrease in desertification, forest fires and illegal logging. The Gambia has managed to buck a strong deforestation trend in Africa with over 350 villages managing twelve percent of the country’s forests, with a net increase in forest cover of 8.5 percent over the last two decades.

The second Silver Award went to the US Lacey Act amendment of 2008 which prohibits all trade in wood and plant products that are knowingly illegally sourced from a US state or any foreign country. “The Lacey Act enforces the environmental law of even the weakest of countries in the most powerful way. If all countries followed its example, environmental law would be globally enforced and our biosphere would be protected,” says jury member Tewolde Berhan Egziabher, Director General, Environmental Protection Authority, Ethiopia and World Future Councilor. The strength of the Act lies in its ability to target and place responsibility on every stage of the timber supply chain. It has forced importers to take responsibility for their wood products and has already produced positive results in increasing due diligence assessments and demand for certified wood products.

Jan McAlpine, Director of the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests, states: “Celebrating innovation to benefit the world’s forests is one of the primary objectives of the International Year of Forests, 2011. This year’s Future Policy Award recognises policies that have succeeded in translating a vision for a sustainable future into tangible action. The UNFF applauds the three winning governments in Rwanda, The Gambia and the US for their extraordinary sustainable forest management policies: incorporating social, environmental and economic actions into a sustainable future for their countries.”

An international jury composed of experts from academia, government, international bodies, civil society and indigenous groups from all five continents had assessed the nominations against the World Future Council’s Seven Principles for Future Just Lawmaking. Honourable mentions were also bestowed upon forest policies from Bhutan, Nepal and Switzerland. In total twenty policies from sixteen countries were nominated for the award.

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Please find more information here

Factsheet with information the winning policies, our partners and the award
http://worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Factsheet_2011_Future_Policy_Award.pdf

Webcast of the press conference at UN Headquarters, at which the winners were announced
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/c/press-conferences.html>

Brochure with information on the 2011 Future Policy Award
http://worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/2011_Future_Policy_Award_Brochure_En.pdf



Future Policy Award 2011

Factsheet of Winning Policies

Rwanda: National Forest Policy, initiated in 2004

Rwanda's environment suffered tremendous pressure after the genocide and breakdown of law and order in 1994 due to sky-rocketing demand for wood to reconstruct the country. But despite continuing population and land pressures, Rwanda is one of only three countries in Central and Western Africa to achieve a major reversal in the trend of declining forest cover. A new National Forest Policy, aiming to make forestry one of the bedrocks of the economy and of the national ecological balance, was initiated in 2004 and Law N° 57/2008 introduced a ban on plastic bags. Massive reforestation and planting activities that promoted indigenous species and involved the local population were undertaken, and new measures such as agro-forestry and education about forest management were implemented with a variety of ecological, social and economic benefits. As a result Rwanda is on course to reach its goal of increasing forest cover to 30% of total land area by 2020.

The Gambia: Community Forest Policy, initiated in 1995

The Gambian model of community forest management is an innovative success. It aims to achieve sustainable forest management and poverty alleviation by handing control of forests to the communities that use them. Despite being one of the world's poorest countries with a rapidly growing population, Gambia has managed to buck a strong deforestation trend in the Western and Central African region by showing a net increase in forest cover of 8.5 percent over the last two decades. Using a phased approach, the policy includes a far reaching tenure transition of forest land from state ownership to permanent ownership by communities (which currently stands at 12 percent of forest lands). The policy has also achieved a reduction in illegal logging and the incidence of forest fires in community forest areas as well as contributing to the development of new markets for branch wood and other forest products which benefit women and rural populations economically.

USA: The Lacey Act with its amendment of 2008

Illegal logging and the international trade in illegal timber has been recognised as a major global problem causing environmental damage, costing producer countries billions of dollars in lost revenue, promoting corruption, undermining the rule of law and good governance and funding armed conflict. The United States have become the first country in the world to place an outright, criminally enforceable ban on the import of illegally harvested timber. The issue is addressed both nationally and internationally from the demand side by requiring that importers of wood products and subsequent handlers in the supply chain exercise due care to ensure that wood in their possession is of legal origin. The Lacey Act amendments have forced importers to take responsibility for their wood products and have already produced positive results in increasing due diligence assessments and demand for certified wood products. The Act also has the potential to significantly reduce illegal logging by withdrawing the huge rewards received by illegal loggers from the international market.

Background information on the Future Policy Award

20 forest policies from 16 countries were nominated for the Future Policy Award. International organisations, including the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as well as others including the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) submitted the nominations.



The jury is composed of experts on sustainability and forests from all five continents and includes Jan McAlpine, Director, United Nations Forum on Forests, Professor Marie Claire Cordonier Segger, Director, Center for International Sustainable Development Law, Jakob von Uexkull, Chair, World Future Council and Right Livelihood Award, Tewolde Berhan Egziabher, Director General, Environmental Protection Authority, Ethiopia, Simone Lovera, Executive Director, Global Forest Coalition and Pauline Tangiora, Maori elder from the Rongomaiwahine tribe. In the International Year on Biodiversity the Future Policy Award 2010 went to Costa Rica's Biodiversity Law of 1998.

Notes to Editors

The World Future Council

The World Future Council brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy-making. Its up to 50 eminent members from around the globe have already successfully promoted change. The Council addresses challenges to our common future and provides decision makers with effective policy solutions. The World Future Council is registered as a charitable foundation in Hamburg, Germany. For more information, visit www.worldfuturecouncil.org

For information on the Future Policy Award: www.worldfuturecouncil.org/future_policy_award.html

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The International Year of Forests

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness of management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The theme of the Year is "Forests for People" celebrating the central role of people in sustainable forest management. The Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based in NY, serves as the focal point for the implementation of the International Year of Forests. The Secretariat works in cooperation with governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and international, regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, as well as relevant major groups. For more information visit www.un.org/forests. For additional information, please contact Mita Sen at sen@un.org or Sylvia Chen at chen14@un.org.

The United Nations Forum on Forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) is an intergovernmental policy forum which promotes the "management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and strengthens long-term political commitment to this end". The Forum was established in 2000 by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and is composed of all Member States of the United Nations. In 2007, UNFF adopted the landmark UN Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (Forest Instrument). The instrument provides a comprehensive framework for national action and international cooperation to reduce deforestation, prevent forest degradation, promote sustainable livelihoods and reduce poverty for all forest-dependent peoples. The Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) is located at United Nations Headquarters in New York. For more information, visit www.un.org/esa/forests/. For additional information, please contact Mita Sen at sen@un.org or Sylvia Chen at chen14@un.org.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties onboard, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to

biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders. This includes indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 160 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal, Canada. For more information, visit www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact David Ainsworth at david.ainsworth@cbd.int or +1 514 287 7025, or Johan Hedlund at johan.hedlund@cbd.int or +1 514 287 6670.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy. FAO is also a source of knowledge and information. FAO helps developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition for all. Since the founding in 1945, FAO has focused special attention on developing rural areas, home to 70 percent of the world's poor and hungry people. For additional information, please contact Maria De Cristofaro at Maria.Decristofaro@fao.org or +39 06 570 52120 / + 39 345 499 6331, or Irina Utkina at Irina.Utkina@fao.org or +39 06 570 52542 / +39 34 88 967 961.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, non-governmental, not for profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. FSC is a unique forum where stakeholders from around the world meet and define essential social and environmental criteria for forest management. These fundamental principles are realized in forests worldwide through FSC certification. Through programs, services and solutions that support FSC certification, the Forest Stewardship Council empowers organizations, businesses and communities to support forest management that meets the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations. Find more information at www.fsc.org. For additional information, please contact Alison Kriscenski at a.kriscenski@fsc.org.