



Winners of the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2012 announced

Tokyo/Montreal 20 September 2012 – The winners of the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity have been announced today in Tokyo. The MIDORI Prize is a biennial international prize organized by the AEON Environmental Foundation in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to honour individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at global, regional or local levels.

The winners of the 2012 Prize are: Dr. Juan Carlos Castilla, Professor of Marine Ecology at Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile; Dr. Rodrigo Gamez-Lobo, President of Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio) and; Dr. Vo Quy, Honorary President at the Center for Natural Resources Management and Environmental Studies (CRES), Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

Each recipient is awarded a wooden plaque, a commemorative gift and a monetary prize of \$100,000 US dollars to support their work in safeguarding biodiversity. The Prize will be awarded at a ceremony in Hyderabad, India, on Wednesday 17 October 2012, held in conjunction with the high-level segment of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) to the Convention on Biological Diversity. A Winners' Forum will then be held in Tokyo, Japan on Monday 22 October 2012 at the U Thant Hall of the United Nations University.

Takuya Okada, the Chairman of the AEON Environmental Foundation said: "I hope the outstanding work of the winners, and the recognition given by the MIDORI Prize, will serve to inspire others to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020."

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said: "Protecting life on earth, which is the basis of, and closely connected to our daily lives, is not only the responsibility of the ministries and agencies in charge of protection of the environment, but is also the responsibility of each and every citizen and all sectors of society. The Secretariat is pleased to be a partner of this unique initiative that strongly supports promotion of public awareness on biodiversity".

The MIDORI Prize was established by the AEON Environmental Foundation in 2010, during the International Year of Biodiversity. The year 2012 is the second time the MIDORI Prize is being awarded.

Notes for editors

(1) The 2012 Midori Prize Winners

Dr. Juan Carlos Castilla (Chile) – Professor, Marine Ecology, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Dr. Juan Carlos Castilla is a marine scientist who has succeeded in translating the findings of his research into national policy to enable the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. His work with governments, coastal and more marginalized artisanal fisher communities who are among the most vulnerable ecologically and economically in the face of biodiversity loss and adverse impacts of climate change, is commendable. He proved that the small scale Marine Protected Area is effective for sustainably developing the community as well as improving the livelihood of small sized fishermen. His achievements can be regarded as an integration model of science, policies and capacity development, and indicate the possibility of growing a Green economy. With more community-based researchers and practitioners like him to ensure ecosystem based management in communities around the world, there is hope that the Aichi Targets will be met.

Coastal and marine biodiversity, also addressed at Rio+20, is an internationally growing concern. It has been the theme for this year's International Day for Biological Diversity and will be a major agenda item at COP11. Dr. Castilla's pioneering activities in the marine field will call attention to the urgency of actions needed to reduce pressures on coastal and marine biodiversity.

Dr. Rodrigo Gamez-Lobo (Costa Rica) – President, Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio)

Prior to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, Drs. Rodrigo Gamez-Lobo and Daniel Janzen founded Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio) in 1991 in order to organize the inventory of biodiversity. Dr. Gamez has contributed to the organization of the inventory in Costa Rica through training of parataxonomists, and has made significant efforts for thoroughly introducing biodiversity into the school and university curricula. He has headed the INBio since its establishment and presented the importance of biodiversity in a unique and concrete way. His achievements are outstanding. He has also been successful in providing ecotourism income more valuable than agriculture to Costa Rica through designating a stable set of national parks covering 25% of Costa Rica, a country of mega-diversity. He has demonstrated a good model of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to tropical countries that have problems of development and conservation. Thanks to his persistent commitment, his research activities facilitated policy which is now the foundation of lifestyle and nature tourism and a pathway to economic development, and put biodiversity on Costa Rica's national agenda. Among his numerous contributions, his work has shown

that good science can and does lead to good policy and governance. His contributions to major issues of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the Global Taxonomy Initiative and access and benefit sharing, are also highly evaluated.

Dr. Vo Quy (Viet Nam) – Honorary President, Center for Natural Resources Management and Environmental Studies (CRES), Vietnam National University, Hanoi

War is often said to be one of the main drivers of environmental degradation. The Vietnam War is one such war of which the country still bears the scars. Dr. Vo Quy devised an ambitious master plan for rehabilitating 50% of the country's forests from severe environmental devastation. This plan, underpinned by his scientific expertise, was adopted by the government as the National Conservation Strategy, and he has steadily implemented the plan. He has also contributed to heightened public awareness and capacity building by making efforts to foster young researchers and community involvement. His work to regenerate the forests seriously devastated by adverse effects of Agent Orange is a living testimony to one man's commitment to using science to work with communities to rehabilitate the degraded environments around them, restore habitats and increase biodiversity. His achievements are influential at national and regional levels and a model to other developing nations of the conservation and rehabilitation of nature, offering hope that lands devastated by urbanization or warfare can be regenerated. War and its impacts aside, forest degradation and increased biodiversity loss is a challenge faced by communities worldwide and the example led by his lifework could potentially contribute to forest regeneration and biodiversity conservation activities beyond the borders of Viet Nam.

(2) The MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity

The year 2010 was a milestone in fields related to biodiversity. The United Nations had declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) was held in Nagoya, Aichi, Japan. In commemoration of this important year, the AEON Environmental Foundation, which also celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2010, established "The MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity." The MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity is a biennial international prize honouring individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at global, regional or local levels. The aims of this prize are to extend the developmental influence of the individual's efforts to various projects relating to biodiversity throughout the world, and to raise awareness about biodiversity.

For more information visit: www.midoripress-aeon.net/prize/index.html

Selection Process

Announcement of the prize was made through media including the website of the prize (www.midoripress-aeon.net). Nominations were accepted from the MIDORI Prize

website and from academic advisors, and 145 candidates were nominated from March 1 (Wed.) to June 30 (Sat.). Nominees came from more than 50 countries. Through preliminary examinations by the Selection Committee, consisting of researchers and experts, the final selection was conducted by the Judging Committee Meeting.

Criteria

The recipients of the Prize are expected to have made outstanding contributions to the conservation of biodiversity from a global perspective and to make further contributions in future activities related to biodiversity. Also, by honoring the recipients, we expect dissemination and promotion of such activities at a global level. In order to select such recipients, applications were judged based on the following criteria:

- International contribution
- Contribution to conservation and sustainable use
- Social contribution
- Long-term viewpoints/Continuity
- Creativity/Originality
- Civic mindedness/Broad viewpoints and
- Efficacy/Influence.

Organization of the Prize

Organization: AEON Environmental Foundation

Co-organization: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Support: Ministry of the Environment, Japan

The Asahi Shimbun Company

(3) AEON Environmental Foundation

The AEON Environmental Foundation was established in 1990, based on a vision involving a quest for peace, respect for humans, and support to regions. Since its establishment, the Foundation has made diverse efforts in planting trees in Japan and abroad, supporting environmental NGOs and NPOs, and organizing international congresses. Regarding the tree planting, the Foundation, along with citizen volunteers, has planted about 1 million trees around the Great Wall of China. The number of trees they have planted throughout the world totals more than 1.8 million.

In 2009, the foundation established and organized “The Japan Awards for Biodiversity (domestic prize).” This prize is also biennial, as is the MIDORI Prize, and these prizes are awarded alternately.

In order to sustain our green planet for future generations, through its various activities the AEON Environmental Foundation will make further efforts toward supporting biodiversity.

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(4) 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, 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 including 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, 162 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. For more information visit: www.cbd.int.

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