

## The MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2020 Winner

**Wirsiy Emmanuel Binyuy (Cameroon)**

**Founder, Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW)**



### Remarks

I am filled with joy to be MIDORI Prize Winner. It came like a dream but my efforts and achievements in biodiversity conservation merit it. I am happy that my local actions are seen globally and acknowledged.

I have grown up with a passion for biodiversity. This pushed me to do Environmental Sciences at the undergraduate level and Environmental Restoration at Masters Level. At the undergraduate level, I was columnist in 'The Post' Newspaper on the green page. Later, I worked as volunteer with the Cameroon Wildlife Aid Fund (CWAF) on ex-situ conservation of primates. I moved from ex-situ conservation to in-situ conservation in Global Village

Cameroon to protect gorillas and chimpanzees in Deng Deng forest from poaching and also protect their habitat from being flooded by Lom Pangar dam.

In 2007, we created Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW). We tackled bushfire that destroyed biodiversity in Kilum-Ijim forest. Through CAMGEW, I used apiculture to engage communities in conservation. This helped reduced bushfire from 7 in 2012 to zero in 2019. It created jobs and income for communities. The CAMGEW-Honeyshop (Climate SmartShop) was created to convert bee farmers honey to money and it serve as opportunity cost for forgone bushfire by communities. I have led the planting of 87250 native trees of 12 types in Kilum-Ijim forest and trained more than 1200 bee farmers.

This award tells a story that passion, hard work and commitment cannot be hidden. I dedicate this award to communities that use indigenous knowledge to protect their forest.

### Achievement

Mr. Wirsiy is the founder and the Director of Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) . He studied Environmental Sciences at the undergraduate level and Environmental Restoration at Master Level. In October 2007 he founded the Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) which is a non-profit organization to look for solutions to environmental and gender issues in Cameroon. CAMGEW works locally and thinks globally, integrating gender in solving environmental problems.

He has been integrating gender issues with forest conservation and regeneration by collecting seeds and seedlings with community involvement, developing nursery beds, and organizing forest patrols. He has also brought to the community a sustainable source of income, the apiculture business, and has contributed to the development of capacity such as by putting environmental education into practice and organizing apiculture cooperatives.

Since 2012, he has been working to regenerate the 20, 000 ha Kilum-Ijim forest in the North West Region, Cameroon. As of 2020, they planted 87,250 native trees, developed 3 tree nurseries of 150,000 native trees. In partnership with local authorities and forest stakeholders the platforms were created to discuss forest issues and 7 Forest Management Institutions organized to manage the forest.

He also engaged in the environmental education for the 300,000 forest persons. It aims to build nature lovers and change negative behavior towards forest. This is done through field-based environmental education in tree nursery and forest, using media like facebook, newspapers, CAMGEW website, various blogs, television, radio and through gatherings like schools, social groups, traditional men's clubs, women's groups and various organized trainings.

He learned that apiculture is the best way to engage local people in forest management. 2,000 forest persons were trained on bee farming and organized into 6 honey cooperatives. He established honey shop in Bamenda to convert bee farmers' honey to money. Introduction of apiculture generated employment and income for the community, and it resulted in gender equality and forest conservation. Though originally aiming to solve both environmental- and gender-related issues, Mr. Wirsiy has greatly contributed to biodiversity protection and the advancement of sustainable use.

Mr. Wirsiy has been leading the improvement of Cameroon's environment on a platform of reforestation, promoting productive activities effectively embodied in apiculture, and engaging in environmental protection activities that suite with his region. His ability to leverage experience from one initiative to the next is evident in the growing number of women and youth taking part in conservation activities. And his actions have a significant impact not only locally but globally.