

Nov. 27, 2018

## **The MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2018 – The award ceremony and winners' forum were held at the Palace Hotel, Tokyo on 31 October, 2018.**

The MIDORI Prize is a biennial international prize co-organized by the AEON Environmental Foundation and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at the global level.

The winners of the 2018 Prize are: Dr. Kathy MacKinnon, Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (U.K); Mr. Assad Serhal, Director General of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (Lebanon); and Dr. Abdul Hamid Zakri, Former Science advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia (Malaysia).



Each of the Prize Winners was presented a wooden plaque, a commemorative gift and a monetary prize of 100,000 US dollars in support of their work in safeguarding biodiversity by Mr. Takuya Okada, Chairman of the AEON Environmental Foundation.

Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity representing the co-organizer of the Prize, offered her congratulations via a video message. Also, as a supporter representative, Mr. Hideka Morimoto, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of the Environment, delivered a congratulatory message. In addition, His Excellency Mr. Nidal Yehya, Ambassador of the Lebanese Republic attended and delivered a congratulatory address.

### **Lecture abstract of Winners' Forum**

Following the award ceremony, the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2018 Winners' Forum was held. Question-and-answer sessions with the winners were moderated by invitee Mr. Takejiro Sueyoshi, Trustee of the AEON Environmental Foundation and Chairperson of the World Wide Fund for Nature, Japan (WWF Japan).

Dr. Kathy MacKinnon

Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (U.K.)



Theme: Protected Areas: Conserving Biodiversity and Underpinning Human Welfare

The IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas is the world's premier network of protected area expertise. In particular, we carry out our activities to achieve Target 11 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. (Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.) This target is closely related to the "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", adopted at the United Nations Summit in 2015.

In the United Nations Environment Program, it was reported that the earth's temperature was estimated to increase by about three degrees by the end of this century. While responding to climate change and solving global environment problems are urgent issues, there are many instances of cases resulted in specific changes, such as the conservation activities in the Amazon region, which holds around 10% of the world's carbon stock in terrestrial ecosystems, establishment of protected areas in Colombia and Palau, and the Work for Water Program in South Africa.

While carrying out conservation activities, we now also need to be more creative. Imagine what we could achieve for biodiversity conservation and human wellbeing and welfare if we all came together! If everything came together, we would start to see a world in which all people equitably and inclusively experience the diverse benefits of connectedness with nature wherever they live, work, learn, or play and in the process also learn to give back to nature and the earth through actions that support nature and parks of all forms.

Let's unite and work together to change the world!

Mr. Assad Serhal

## Director General of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (Lebanon)



Theme: The HIMA, A Way of Life; A Mission of Peace

Although Lebanon is a small country, it has a typical Mediterranean temperate climate and lies on the second most important flyway for migratory birds in the world, as well as hosting unique birds and biodiversity. Meanwhile, overhunting and poaching of birds still occurs. The purpose of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (Birdlife Lebanon) is to protect Lebanon's nature, birds and biodiversity for the people and to realize the sustainable use of natural resources through the HIMA. HIMA is a traditional local-based conservation system similar to Japan's "Satoyama". It was a system that began 1,500 years ago in the Middle East but has been overlooked for the past century due to geopolitical issues. Lebanon has been at the forefront to revive HIMA, the first of which was established in 2004. To date, we have a total of 22 HIMA in Lebanon.

To maintain the HIMA system, we need to promote HIMA's empowerment, to respect bottom-up approaches, and to produce economic incentives. In order to realize these, one approach is to collaborate with the private sector, such as in branding agricultural products made of natural resources from HIMA. It is also important for people, especially the young ( Homat AL-Hima ) as agents for change, to learn about the related communities and regions, and seek out jobs that co-exist with the local nature. This will help them respect and make them more aware of the need to protect such regions. Creating jobs in the regions is the key.

First of all, we all need to discuss how to create a common framework for the future. In this process, a common objective will be determined, and by reflecting that objective in policies, legislations and practices, it will be possible to move toward realization of the goal.

Dr. Abdul Hamid Zakri

Former Science advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia (Malaysia)



Theme: The politics of biodiversity loss - why one should make a difference

Today's story is my personal story, and at the same time it is also a story for everyone. It is a story about how we can change the situation by adopting an approach of deliberation and action against the prospect of global disasters, which threaten the whole of humanity and life on earth. Each of us is a party.

The problems of biodiversity loss and decline of ecosystem services are nothing new. As seen in "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson in 1962, the problem has been with us for some time and has been discussed at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and so on. But, as the 2010 biodiversity Target conservation has not been achieved, the world has failed to solve this problem and the situation has only been worsening. In Malaysia, tropical rainforests are rapidly disappearing due to economic activity.

The biggest factor in this situation is the lack of people's perception. In order to improve on this, we must be persuasive, reasonable and easy to understand. In addition, we need to show that wealth and job creation as well as human happiness are things that can only come about if we have biodiversity. Only a persuasive "why" resonating throughout society will be successful in waking us up to the urgent need to negotiate over the who, what, where, when and how of halting disastrous biodiversity loss. Here, three qualities are asked of scientists in order to convince other stakeholders about the serious effects of loss of biodiversity: Credibility, Relevance, and Legitimacy. Here are the factors of why one should make a difference, i.e., the one who could change the situation in the future.

"If humans were to be wiped off from the surface of the earth today, the birds and the trees would still be here tomorrow. If the birds and trees were to go extinct today, humans would be wiped out from the surface of the earth tomorrow."

**The Forum was brought to a close with a comment from Mr. Takejiro Sueyoshi, the moderator.**

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set and the Paris agreement was adopted. As part of this process, roles have been partially shifting from state to non-state actors. While policies are still important, the roles of all of us, such as the private sector, civil societies, and so on, those who should be implementing the policies, have been increasing.

Dr. Zakri introduced to us the wise words of a Native American in the lecture. I would like to conclude this forum by introducing another Native American saying.

"When the last tree is cut down, the last fish eaten, and the last stream poisoned, you will realize that you cannot eat money".