

Kathy MacKinnon (U.K.)

Chair, IUCN/World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)



Remarks

I am delighted and very honoured to receive the Midori Prize. Over a long career in conservation, I have been privileged to visit some of the world's most spectacular natural places, working with many conservation champions – government officers, NGOs, indigenous people, communities and many exceptional individuals. In accepting this prize, I would like to acknowledge those partners and colleagues, who are often working with limited resources and under difficult, challenging and sometimes dangerous conditions, to maintain, manage and restore parks and reserves to conserve habitats and species for now and future generations.

Protected areas are the cornerstones of biodiversity conservation, but they offer many more benefits to society: helping to underpin human welfare and wellbeing, contributing to food and water security, helping people to cope with climate change and providing safe and secure places for recreation, and healthy and sustainable livelihoods. Our challenge today is to fulfil commitments first made at Nagoya and work together to achieve the ambitions of Aichi Target 11 by 2020, through valuing and supporting protected and conserved areas and the people who maintain and manage them.

Achievement

An Oxford-trained zoologist, Dr. MacKinnon has been a long-time champion for nature conservation on the international stage. She has worked tirelessly to protect and manage some of the world's most beautiful and biodiversity-rich areas and to promote the contribution that nature conservation and protected areas can make in addressing some of humanity's most pressing challenges – climate change, disaster reduction, human health and wellbeing, and sustainable development.

Dr. MacKinnon is highly deserving of the MIDORI Prize for her significant contributions to conservation in three major areas. First she devoted 10 years as a field biologist and conservationist in Indonesia, where she was engaged in tropical ecology research as well as planning and management of protected areas. This work earned her recognition as one of the world's experts on the ecology of this complex, biodiversity-rich country.

The second area concerns her work subsequent to joining the World Bank, where she became Lead Biodiversity Specialist. In her 16-year career with the Bank, she brought her knowledge, enthusiasm and networking skills to numerous projects to strengthen biodiversity conservation and natural resource management in Africa, Asia, Central and Latin America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. These projects included support for protected areas and mainstreaming biodiversity issues in development programs, contributing both to conservation and more sustainable livelihoods for local communities. The programs involved working with a wide variety of government and non-government organisations as well as many other stakeholders, who have directly benefitted from her commitment to conservation.

The third area of contribution has been her leadership of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, first as a Vice Chair, then Deputy Chair and since 2015 as Chair of the Commission. A long term strong supporter of IUCN and the Commission, since 2010 she has taken on this demanding pro-bono role full time and has devoted many personal resources to the global IUCN mission of 'A just world that values and conserves nature'. Under her leadership, WCPA has become a focal point for innovative, science-based conservation practice throughout the world.