



## Winners of the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2014

*Tokyo and Montreal, 8 September 2014* – The winners of the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2014 have been announced today in Tokyo, Japan and Montreal, Canada. The MIDORI Prize is a biennial international prize 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 global, regional or local levels.

The winners of the 2014 Prize are: **Dr. Kamal Bawa**, President, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), India, and Distinguished Professor, University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA; **Dr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah**, Chair, Ghana National Biodiversity Committee, Ghana and; **Dr. Bibiana Vilá**, Principal Researcher, National Research Council (CONICET) and Director, Vicuñas, Camelids and Environment (VICAM), Argentina.

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. They will be honored at an Award Ceremony on Wednesday 15 October 2014 in Pyeongchang, South Korea, held in conjunction with the high-level segment of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 12). The recipients will also deliver public lectures at a Winners' Forum that will be held on Tuesday 21 October 2014 at the U Thant Hall of the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan.

Mr. Takuya Okada, Chairman of the AEON Environmental Foundation, said: "The conservation of biodiversity and the prevention of climate change are two of the greatest challenges of our time. We hope that the MIDORI Prize will contribute to meeting this global challenge, to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020."

Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said: "The MIDORI Prize is a unique and powerful initiative to help raise awareness and encourage action for the mainstreaming conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. I want to congratulate this year's winners and also thank them for their important contributions to the biodiversity and sustainable development agenda."

The MIDORI Prize was established by the AEON Environmental Foundation in 2010 to mark the International Year of Biodiversity. The year 2014 is the third time the MIDORI Prize is being awarded.

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## Notes for editors

### (1) Reasons for Awarding the Prize



#### **Dr. Kamal Bawa (India)**

President, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), India, and Distinguished Professor, University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA

Dr. Kamal Bawa (b. 1939) has made intellectual contributions to biodiversity science through ground-breaking research on conservation and rural livelihoods in biodiversity hotspots, publishing nearly 200 research articles and 10 books or monographs. He discovered new modes of reproduction in tropical forest trees that changed prevailing notions about their ecology and evolution; he developed a new class of genetic markers for tropical forest trees, and showed that forest fragmentation, widespread in the tropics, depletes biodiversity; he developed new paradigms and tools for conservation; explored synergies between conservation and social goals such as poverty reduction; and identified conservation priorities in biodiversity hotspots.

Dr. Bawa established the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) in India as a major research center for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. ATREE now supports three offices with seven satellite centers across India and employs over 155 staff. It takes innovative approaches to conservation and sustainability science, develops novel concepts and tools to manage scarce natural resources, and trains new leaders in interdisciplinary sustainability science. ATREE recently launched its own Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies, with an interdisciplinary doctoral program. ATREE has emerged as one of India's premier conservation organizations, influencing biodiversity research and policy within India, and providing a model for environmental organizations across the world. A recent study of think tanks worldwide by the University of Pennsylvania rated ATREE as the top environmental think tank in Asia and the 19<sup>th</sup> ranked environmental think tank in the world, two years in a row (2011 and 2012).

As chair or member of governing councils of several international groups, Dr. Bawa has influenced the direction of conservation science, action and policy. As President of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation, he has guided the development of a strategic plan for conservation for the 21st century. As part of an international panel on biodiversity in agricultural systems, he co-authored a plan to enhance biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. He played a key role in the development of strategic conservation plans for the Western Ghats and Eastern Himalaya biodiversity "hotspots". He published two popular coffee-table books on India's biodiversity hotspots, *Sahyadris: India's Western Ghats*, and *Himalaya: Mountains of Life* ([www.Himalayabook.com](http://www.Himalayabook.com)) --the only effort to compile popular accounts of two biodiversity hotspots anywhere, and he has co-authored a major textbook for conservation biologists —*Conservation Biology: A Primer for South Asia*.

Altogether, Dr. Bawa has achieved notable outcomes through research, the establishment of the ATREE, influence on global institutions and organizations, and writings in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.



**Dr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana)**

Chair, Ghana National Biodiversity Committee, Ghana

Dr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (b. 1946) is a leader of biodiversity representing Africa. He has held several important positions within international institutions including Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. He has led international negotiations on biodiversity from a global perspective and had a worldwide impact. Especially, he has made significant contributions in the establishment and management of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) through advocating the importance of dialogues between science and policy.

Dr. Oteng-Yeboah has, for many years, fulfilled important roles as a representative of Ghana and Africa, in important meetings related to conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity. His contributions to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity-related processes have been very significant. In addition to chairing to the ninth and tenth meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), he held positions in various expert groups on forests, oceans, protected areas and capacity building, and participated in the work of the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). For a number of years he has served as Chair of the International Partnership for the SATOYAMA Initiative (IPSI).

Dr. Oteng-Yeboah's contribution to the promotion of dialogues between science and policy is noteworthy. Prior to the planning of IPBES, he advocated the importance of dialogue between science and policy and the establishment of an interface between the two. In addition, he played a leading role in coordinating countries' views and positions in the consultation process that led to the establishment of IPBES, notably by serving as co-chair of the initial international planning committee meetings.

(\*) International Partnership for the SATOYAMA Initiative (IPSI), established in 2010 during the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD/COP10), is an effort mainly advocated by the Japan's Ministry of the Environment and the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the secondary natural environment such as farmlands and secondary forests. It is considered that Japan's "satoyama," where humans live in harmony with nature, can be a global model for a nature-harmonious society.



**Dr. Bibiana Vilá (Argentina)**

Director, Vicuñas, Camelids and Environment (VICAM)

Principal Researcher, National Research Council (CONICET), Argentina

Dr. Bibiana Vilá's (b. 1961) work focuses on the conservation of wild vicuñas (\*1) in the Andean altiplano. Dr. Vilá has led the implementation of conservation measures integrating both traditional knowledge of indigenous communities and modern science including ecology, ethology and animal welfare. She has also promoted support to local communities and environmental education. This has been achieved through the sustainable use of economically high-value vicuna fiber realizing both the conservation of wild animals and the stable development of regional communities.

Dr. Vilá's achievements related to the conservation and sustainable use of vicuñas can be seen as a modern model for conservation, with very significant impacts. In the Andean altiplano, vicuñas are a wild species of enormous ecological, economic and socio-cultural importance, and highly prized for the utility of their fine fleece. However, vicuñas were slaughtered in large numbers for centuries and their population massively decreased. In order to attain a recovery of numbers and promote their sustainable use, Dr. Vilá has led Vicuñas, Camelids and Environment (VICAM\*2), a research group, and recovered, in collaboration with local Andean communities, an ancient prehispanic wildlife capture technique, the "Chaku," that enables shearing fiber from live vicuñas by surrounding them. The group has developed approaches which will permit the regular capture and shearing and release of wild vicuñas. The approaches generate income for economically deprived indigenous communities and give the communities the incentives of conservation of ecosystems and species. The group's efforts aim at long-term vicuña conservation and stabilization and the improvement of livelihoods of indigenous communities. This is achieved through blending local indigenous knowledge and a modern scientific approach, encouraging the independence of local indigenous communities, and environmental education. Her activities are a good example of realizing the concept of "living in harmony with nature."

Dr. Vilá's contributions as a leader who has realized both the conservation of wildlife and stable development of local communities are highly valued.

(\*1) Vicuñas

Vicuñas are wild South American camelids. Vicuñas are listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES) (some populations in Argentina and other countries, are still vulnerable and listed in Appendix I). Fine vicuña fiber is treated as a luxury item.

(Note: Some populations are listed in ap I and others are listed in ap II, depending on the conservation situation, it is not a rule for the entire species)

(\*2) Vicuñas, Camelids and Environment (VICAM)

VICAM, a research group on vicuñas, camelids and the environment, has approached conservation aspects from biological and social science perspectives, including environmental education. Twelve researchers promote the scientifically-based sustainable use of biodiversity while respecting the traditional perceptions of indigenous communities.



## (2) The MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity

2010 was declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Biodiversity. In the same year, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity was held in Nagoya, Japan, and the AEON Environmental Foundation celebrated its 20th anniversary. To commemorate this important year, the AEON Environmental Foundation established the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity.

The MIDORI Prize is an international prize co-organized by the AEON Environmental Foundation and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Prize honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. It aims to encourage positive action for biodiversity and inspire others by showcasing the notable work of those it honors.

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

### *Selection Process*

Nominations were invited from members of the public worldwide. In addition, the organizers solicited nominations from a select group of invited MIDORI Prize Nominators, who are academics, scientists and other experts working on biodiversity around the world. **The Secretariat of the Prize** oversaw the selection process and a **Selection Panel** conducted a first screening of the nominated candidates. Based on a list of candidates provided by the Selection Panel, a **Judging Committee** conducted further documentary examination. The winners were finally selected from the shortlisted candidates at the Judging Committee Meeting.

### *Criteria*

The engagement and collaboration of all stakeholders, including citizens, governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, researchers and the private sector are essential to safeguard biodiversity. To promote such multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration, the MIDORI Prize is open to everyone contributing to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the field of practical action, science, policy or public awareness.

Requirements:

- Have made outstanding achievements that greatly contribute to biodiversity (Achievement)
- Have the ability to influence future activities related to biodiversity (Potential)
- Have conducted work which has impacts on various activities for biodiversity around the world (Impact).



#### Viewpoints of Evaluation:

- International contribution
- Contribution to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
- Social contribution
- Long-term perspective and continuity
- Creativity and originality
- Civic mindedness and breadth of perspective
- Efficacy and influence.

#### *The Judging Committee for The MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2014* (Honorifics omitted, as of 1 March, 2014)

#### Committee Chairman

Takuya Okada, Chairman, AEON Environmental Foundation

#### Judges (Alphabetical order)

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

Kunio Iwatsuki, Professor Emeritus, The University of Tokyo

Daizaburo Kuroda, Senior Fellow, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

Anne McDonald, Professor, Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Sophia University

Hem Pande, Additional Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests

Representative of CBD COP 11 President

Shiro Wakui, Professor, Department of Environmental and Information Studies, Tokyo City University

Vice Chairman, Japan Committee of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

#### *Organization of the Prize*

Organization: AEON Environmental Foundation

Co-organization: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Support: Ministry of the Environment, Japan

K.K. Kyodo News, The Asahi Shimbun Company, The Mainichi Newspapers, The Yomiuri Shimbun



### **(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 conducting forestation in Japan and abroad, supporting environmental NGOs and NPOs, and organizing international congresses. The foundation, along with citizen volunteers, has planted more than 2 million trees around the world, including about 1 million trees around the Great Wall of China.

In 2009, the foundation established “The Japan Awards for Biodiversity”, a domestic prize that, like the MIDORI Prize, is awarded biennially. The two prizes are awarded in alternate years.

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.

AEON Environmental Foundation

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Website: [www.aeon.info/ef/](http://www.aeon.info/ef/)

### **(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 194 contracting Parties up to now, 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, 166 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. Another subsidiary agreement, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, will enter into force in October 2014. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Protocols is located in Montreal. For more information visit: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int).

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