Winners of the MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2012 announced

Tokyo, 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, which will be 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.

Tayuka 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 life, is not only the responsibility of the ministries or agencies in charge of protection of the environment, but 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 Catolica 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 throughly 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 declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. Also, 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 established in 2010, 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 well as 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.

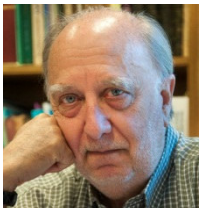
Contact details:

AEON Environmental Foundation
1-5-1 Nakase, Mihama-ku, Chiba City, Chiba Prefecture, 261-8515, Japan
Website: www.aeon.info/ef/
E-mail: ef@aeon.info

(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.

Attachment



Dr. Juan Carlos Castilla (Chile)
Professor, Marine Ecology, Department of Ecology,
Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile

Dr. Juan Carlos Castilla (b. 1940) started his career in marine preserves and management areas that play an important role in the sustainable use of natural resources. Dr. Castilla who considered to be “the pioneer of South American marine ecology”, is a professor in the Department of Ecology at Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile where he teaches marine and community ecology. He also headed for 18 years the Coastal Marine Station, "Estacion Costera de Investigaciones Marineas," in Las Cruces, Chile, which has operated as a research marine preserve for more than 25 years.

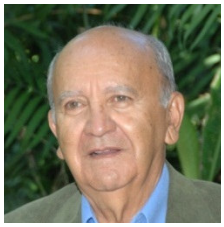
In a long-term experiment at the preserve, Dr. Castilla has worked with artisanal fishing communities to test no-take zones, "human exclusion" areas and seasonal closings. He conducted experiments at the small scale Marine Protected Area (MPA) as the experimental facility of the Catolica University. His research results successfully proved that MPA is effective for increasing natural resources and conserving biodiversity in the surrounding sea areas. He proposed the integration of small scale MPA and fishery, and this proposal was disseminated throughout Chile.
Positive results have greatly influenced the new Chilean Fishery and Aquaculture law especially on matters related to the management of benthic resources. These activities and the results identified the role of small sized fishermen toward sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, realized the institution to conseve artisanal fisheries in Chilien coastal zones, and participated in PISCO (Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans), PEW Foundation Marine Conservation and the Mellon Foundation Coastal Ecosystem projects, with Chilean and US scientists as Profs. Jane Lubchenco, Bruce Menge and Steve Gaines. More than 60 papers have now been published on this unique projects.

Part of the success of his activities is Dr. Castilla's significant theoretical and practical experience in issues related to coastal property rights, management and exploitation areas and co-management. Regarding the integration of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, his achievements in raising awareness about the role of small sized fishers and proposing a new legal system from a biologist are also influential to the world.

Dr. Castilla has been invited by more than 30 universities to offer lectures and seminars, has publsihed over 250 papers and he has been recognized with a number of awards for his pioneering work on marine parks and reserves, the co-manegmet of coastal resources and conservation of marine biodiversity.

Record of Awards

1996 Third World Academy of Science (Award in Biology)
2006 BBVA Foundation Award for Scientific Research (Ecology and Conservation Biology)
2010 National Award for Applied Science and Technology (Government of Chile)
2011 Ramon Margalef Award (Government of Catalonia, Spain)
2012 Wildlife Conservation Award (The Wildlife Conservation Society)



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

Dr. Rodrigo Gámez-Lobo (b. 1936) holds a PhD in Plant Virology from the University of Illinois (1966) and was a research professor at the University of Costa Rica for over three decades (1958- 1990), where he also held numerous administrative positions, including Head of the School of Plant Sciences, Vice-Rector for Research, and Director of the Cellular and Molecular Biology Research Center. During the course of his scientific career, he worked and published extensively on viruses of basic food crops in Central America, insect transmission of plant viruses and molecular characterization of those viruses. He was also active on numerous national and international boards and institutional committees of organizations such as Costa Rica's National Research Council, the Organization for Tropical Studies and the American Phytopathological Society-Caribbean Division. He is currently a member of the Costa Rican National Academy of Sciences and is also associated to several local educational and sustainable development foundations.

As Biodiversity Advisor to President Oscar Arias (1986-1990), Dr. Gámez ran the process that led to the establishment of the National System of Conservation Areas within the first Ministry of Natural Resources (presently the Ministry of the Environment), and to the creation of the Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio), as a private, non-profit, public interest organization. He served as General Director (1989-2003) and has been President of the Board of INBio since the institution's foundation in 1989. This organization has rapidly consolidated as a leading institution in the generation, management and transfer of biodiversity information, and became to be well known as a worldwide model of the institute for biodiversity research. INBio was founded as a NGO, and has worked in close coordination and collaboration with the Ministry of Environment. The objectives of the organizations are to conduct an inventory of Costa Rica´s biodiversity, organize and process the information, and promote the flow of this information nationally and internationally. Its activities include Inventorying and Monitoring, Education and Bioliteracy, Bioprospecting, Policy and Legislation, Land use management and Technical Assitance and Capacity Building. According to its great contributions, INBio has received numerous national and international recognitions and awards.

Dr. Gámez has been also associated with numerous national and international initiatives in biodiversity conservation. He made significant contribution in making “Global Biodiversity Strategy” (WRI, IUCN, UNEP, 1992). As a Costa Rican Government delegate, he was active in the formulation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and served on a number of UNEP biodiversity-related advisory committees. He also coordinated the National Biodiversity Advisory Board of the Ministry of the Environment (1994-1998) that played a fundamental role in the formulation of the Costa Rican National Biodiversity Law and the National Biodiversity Strategy. Dr. Gámez has written and lectured extensively (1990-2012) on Costa Rica's pioneering efforts in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Record of Awards

1983 Bernardo Houssei Prize in Science (Organization of American States)
1992 Peter Scott Award (IUCN's Commission for the Species Survival) (Awarded to INBio under his leadership).
1992 Honorary Award (Banesto Cultural Foundation, Spain)
1995 Prince of Asturias Prize in Science and Technology (Prince of Asturias Foundation)(Awarded to INBio under his leadership)
1997 Leonov Medallion, (Association of Space Explorers)
2004 Green Globe Award (Rainforest Alliance, USA)
2004 Distinguished Scientist (Ministry of Science and Technology, Costa Rica)
2007 Doctor Honoris Causa (Tropical Agricultural Research and Education Center)
2010 Emeritus Professor (University of Costa Rica)
2011 The Magón National Prize for Culture (Ministry of Culture, Costa Rica)

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

Dr. Vo Quy (b.1929) studied biology at the Vietnam teacher-training institute, and in 1956, he began teaching at the University of Hanoi (zoology). In the early 1960s, he studied at Moscow University and earned his Ph. D. in ormithology. He subsequently returned to the University of Hanoi and became a zoology professor. He remains a professor at that university to this day.

In 1971 and in 1974, during the war against the United States, Dr. Quy and other researchers ventured into many engagement zones and found that broad range of dense tropical forests and aglicultural lands were seriously devastated due to the adverse effects of the agent orange. Since this time, he has strongly recognized the importance of the reforestation and greening of Viet Nam. From 1971 to 1985, he served as the leader of the working group for the Research on the Long-Term Effect of Herbicides Used in the War on the Environment and on Living Resources in South Viet Nam. From 1981 to 1990, he served as the vice-chair and then Chair of the National Research Program on the Conservation of nature and rational utilization of natural resources..

In 1985, Dr. Vo Quy founded Vietnam's first environmental research and training institute, the Center for Natural Resources Management and Environmental Studies (CRES), at the University of Hanoi (now Vietnam National University, Hanoi). It was here that he devised a master plan with his colleagues for rehabilitating 50% of the country's forests. This plan was adopted by the government as the National Conservation Strategy. In 1989, he authored the first draft of the Law on Environmental Protection for Vietnam as the leader of a team of scientists and contributed in various ways to national policies for environmental protection.The young CRES scientists have insisted the necessities of the management of nature reserves. They have cooperated with the villagers to implement conservation projects and environmental policies through providing guidelines for nature conservation.

In the wildlife conservation field, Dr.Quy spotted an extremely rare eastern sarus crane, a species believed to be decimated by the war, and endeavored to establish a treaty for the protection of migratory birds in the Indochina peninsula. By 1988, more than 1000 cranes were observed returning to the reserve that was established. Dr. Quy has also worked as a member of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) since 1986, helping to enlarge protected areas and national parks, protect endangered species, and sustainable use of wildlife. He has been working closely with The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), UNEP and MAB/UNESCO for many years.

Dr. Quy, who took the initiative to involve rural communities as the main proponents of the country's nature conservation and reforestation program, is rightly called the father of Vietnam's environmental conservation movement. His efforts and successes in conserving and restoring the damaged natural environment in Vietnam make him an excellent role model for other developing nations with similar environmental conditions.

Record of Awards
1988 WWF- Gold Medal Hong Kong
1992 UNEP Global 500 Rio de Janeiro
1994 IUCN John Philips Memorial Medal Buenos Aires
1994 Bruno H. Schubert Foundation Environmental Prize (Category I), Frankfurt
1995 PEW Scholars Award, University of Michigan
1997 Royal Netherlands Order of the Golden Ark
2003 Blue Planet Prize
2008 selected as one of Time Magazine's "Heroes of the Environment".