Global 500 Laureate, Jeunesse Park Awarded 2007 UNEP Sasakawa Prize

The 2007 UNEP Sasakawa Prize was awarded to 1995 Laureate Jeunesse Park of South Africa and Bangladeshi NGO Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha at an award ceremony this October at New York's Museum of Natural History. The $200,000 prize is awarded every year to individuals or institutions who have made a substantial contribution to the protection and management of the environment. This year's winners were chosen because of their outstanding and inspirational projects in the area of climate change—this year's theme for the Sasakawa Prize.

Ms. Jeunesse Park is the founder and CEO of Food and Trees for Africa (FTFA), South Africa's only national greening and food gardening NGO that promotes greening, sustainable natural resource use and management and food security, through three key programs: Trees for Homes, EduPlant, and the Urban Greening Forum.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said: “These two outstanding winners of the Sasakawa Prize 2007 embody leadership in its finest form—namely creative and determined action that demonstrates real and tangible difference to the people and communities they serve.”

Ms. Park initiated the design of the first carbon calculator in South Africa, using the global Greenhouse Gas Reporting Protocol, and she launched the Carbon Standard in 2006 to make it easy and affordable for government, institutions and communities to offset carbon emissions. The calculator evaluates carbon emitted by a range of activities such as energy consumption, land and air travel, and paper usage. It then calculates how many trees one would need to plant to absorb the carbon generated through the process of photosynthesis.

She has played a significant role in the introduction of the concept of urban forestry. Taking note that over 66% of South Africa's population lives in degraded urban areas, she initiated the Urban Greening Forum.

With support from various international and local environmental entities, she began working with national and local authorities and communities in the barren townships of South Africa to develop parks, nurseries, street trees, and other greening projects. Her work has provided a model for several municipalities such as Soweto, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, Port Elizabeth, and Kimberley.

As for Trees for Homes, with the slogan “A house is not a home without a tree,” it aims to improve the quality of life of the underprivileged by providing plant material, environmental awareness, some short-term employment, and education for those living in low-cost housing developments, while offsetting carbon emissions.

“The Food and Trees For Africa program aims for sustainability and replication and, in the past few years, it has been encouraging to see the government and the private sector in South Africa approach us for assistance in addressing greening and climate change. We feel that over the past 18 years we have sown the seeds of awareness, and they are now germinating and growing to ensure sustainable development for our emerging democracy,” said Ms. Park.

“The prize money will be used to develop climate change awareness and education materials and assist in networking and presentations on climate change to government, business, and the disadvantaged and underserved communities of South Africa,” assured Ms. Park. “Since we are currently lobbying big business in this country, the award will assist us with highlighting the importance of climate change, and options for addressing this, amongst the larger carbon emitters of South Africa,” she added.

The UNEP Sasakawa Prize is sponsored by the Japan-based Nippon Foundation, an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization that supports both domestic and international philanthropic projects. For more information please visit www.unep.org/sasakawa.

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Kick the Habit—
World Environment Day 2008

New Zealand, one of the first countries to pledge a carbon-neutral future, will be the main host of World Environment Day 2008. The focus of the global 2008 celebrations hosted in New Zealand will be on the solutions and opportunities for countries, companies, and communities to “Kick the habit” and decarbonize their economies and lifestyles. Measures include greater energy efficiency in buildings and appliances, a switch towards cleaner and renewable forms of electricity generation and transport systems.

The focus of WED 2008 will also be on the role of forests in countering rises in greenhouse gases. An estimated 20% of emissions contributing to climate change globally are a result of deforestation.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said: “New Zealand is among a pioneer group of countries committed to accelerating a transition to a low carbon and carbon-neutral economy. We are therefore delighted to be holding the main WED 2008 celebrations in Wellington and in communities across this South Pacific nation.”

World Environment Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Another resolution, adopted by the General Assembly the same day, led to the creation of UNEP.

WED is commemorated each year on June 5 in a different city. It is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

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WED 2007
A Retrospective

Last year, the challenge of climate change and threats to polar regions and beyond were spotlighted at the main World Environment Day event in Norway. The WED 2007 theme was “Melting Ice: A Hot Topic,” and so it was fitting that the main celebrations were held near the Arctic Circle in Tromsø, Norway, and concluded with celebrations and discussions at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo. The discussions and forums all focused on the effects that climate change is having on polar ecosystems and communities and the ensuing consequences around the world.

Helen Bjørnøy, Norway’s Minister of the Environment, said in her WED 2007 message, “Ice plays a critical role in shaping our planet’s environment....Shrinking ice cover is a clear sign of global warming....Further global warming of 1°C defines a critical threshold. To keep within this threshold, global greenhouse gas emissions must be halved by the middle of this century.”

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said that although the Arctic and Antarctic feel the effects of melting ice first, this phenomenon affects us all. The circulation of the oceans is affected by the melting and freezing process at the poles. In addition, the actions of those who live away from the poles have an affect on the melting ice. Then, as ice melts, there is a potential for the release of “massive amounts of greenhouse gas methane, which is stored in the Arctic permafrost.”

Global 500 Laureates often attend the main WED events and share stories and successes with their fellow Laureates and environmentalists.
FROM REBELS TO RANGERS

1988 Laureate Perez Olindo's latest assignment has taken him to South Sudan to retrain the former combatants of the South Sudan People’s Liberation Army to the civilian role of national parks rangers. Olindo’s new position as Senior Advisor on Policy and Strategic Planning to the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Conservation, and Tourism, has him putting together a team of trainers to extend his work in the field guiding the rehabilitation of the national parks of South Sudan.

In 2005 the Sudanese government and rebel forces signed an agreement establishing the Government of Southern Sudan and ending the years of civil war in that region. Wildlife biologists could only wonder what happened to Sudan’s animals during that time. Experience has shown that wars can be devastating to wildlife. As peacetime protections collapse, poachers sweep in to kill animals for meat, horn, and ivory. Armies shoot game to feed themselves. To their surprise, researchers found some of the largest herds ever seen. The biologists estimated there were 1.3 million kob, tiang, and gazelle in their survey area. That is close to the size of migrating herds of wildebeest on the Serengeti, long considered the largest migration of mammals.

Olindo will be opening 3 of the 13 protected areas in Southern Sudan to the general public to visit on walking safaris under the guidance of the park rangers now being trained. Accommodations will be in tented camps, but each party will be tailored to visitors’ tastes. These three protected areas are Boma National Park, Nimule National Park located on the common border between South Sudan and Uganda, and the Great Sudd Wetland on the River Nile, which is very rich in water birds, crocodiles, and hippos—even elephants are found on the islands in this wildlife reserve.

As the past Director of the Kenya Wildlife Conservation and Management Department, Dr. Olindo faced political and commercial pressures while strengthening conservation policies and practices in Kenya. Since 1989, Dr. Olindo, a senior associate at the African Wildlife Foundation, has worked in the area of public policy on the conservation of the African elephant throughout the 38 African elephant range states.

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CHINA’S LEADING URBAN DECISION MAKERS WORK TOGETHER FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Harmony Foundation and the National Training Center for Mayors of China trained 40 Chinese mayors and vice mayors for sustainable community development in October 2007. This enormously successful event launched a new collaboration between Harmony and the National Training Center for Mayors of China (NTCMC) to build the Leadership Training Program for Sustainable Community Development in China.

Held at the NTCMC facility, the training featured a dialogue session entitled How City Leaders, Urban Professionals, and Local Residents Can Work Together to Achieve Sustainable Community Development in China. Participants assumed the role of urban development experts invited to help a city address problems of rapid urbanization—how to develop new neighborhoods and relocate thousands of families with as little disruption as possible to their lives, the environment, and the lives of those already living in the area.

“It was important to have the mayors understand roles different from their own,” said Michael Bloomfield, Harmony’s Founder and Executive Director. “In this way, they had the opportunity to better appreciate their critical role as community leaders, and the importance of including all stakeholders in the local decision-making process, a key aspect of sustainable community development.”


Strong support was bolstered by the 17th National Congress when leaders of China’s central government called for socially and environmentally sustainable development, which was applauded by leaders around the world.

“Our generation has a huge responsibility,” Bloomfield added. “With our Chinese partners, we have created tremendous potential for good here. Experts agree that as China’s economy continues to boom, millions will join the ranks of consumers. If China’s patterns of consumption follow those of other fully developed nations, Earth’s resources will be endangered further, and our health and security will be threatened. The stakes are too high for more talk; meaningful action is imperative now,” Bloomfield concluded.

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27 Laureates Encourage Australian Efforts

Verna Simpson (1999 Laureate) and Director of Humane Society International used the power of the pen and wrote a letter of support to Kevin Rudd, Australia's prime minister, asking him to further his efforts to curb global greenhouse gas emissions. Simpson then went one step further and asked Global 500 Laureates around the world to sign the letter. 27 Laureates signed the Letter to the new prime minister.

Here are a few of the points from the letter:

“The undersigned UNEP Global 500 Laureates...are writing to you today to offer our support and encouragement for your government’s commitment to curb global greenhouse gas emissions by working with developing countries to tackle deforestation. As deforestation and other land use practices contribute 18–25% of all global emissions, future actions in this area have the potential to make a significant contribution to the global battle against climate change.”

“Working with developing countries to build enforcement and capacity, Australian government initiatives can encourage conservation of native forests and ecologically sustainable forest industries by assisting with the establishment of native forest conservation, management and monitoring systems, and reforestation programs.”

“Assisting local communities involved in illegal and unsustainable logging and clearing operations to find alternative development and employment opportunities, will surely make large inroads into ameliorating the problems.”

“Furthermore, we note the recent signing of the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership, a $100 million agreement between Australia, Indonesia, and BHP Billiton, to preserve and rehabilitate forest habitat. The cutting of 700 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over 30 years that this agreement represents is not only an effective means of immediately and practically mitigating against global climate change, but will also benefit the biodiversity-rich ecosystems of Kalimantan that are increasingly threatened by widespread land clearing from logging concessions, illegal logging practices and unsustainable agriculture.”

“We would strongly encourage and support similar partnerships being agreed in the coming years, and also Australia’s support for, and investment in, the implementation of much needed pilot projects as a means of ensuring outcomes are delivered on the ground and vital carbon stores including tropical forests are given urgent protection.”

“We are encouraged by the growing consensus about the importance of forests in the global climate change debate and a growing number of developing countries, including Indonesia, Brazil, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea, home to more than 80% of the world’s remaining tropical rainforest, have joined together to lead discussions on this aspect of climate change mitigation.”

“The individual and organisational UNEP Global 500 Laureates below would like to offer our support for your government’s continued efforts to combat global climate change, and we stand ready to assist you in any way we can.”

Verna Simpson
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Update from Cassandra Potier-Watkins, Former Youth Coordinator for Global 500 Forum

I am currently living in Paris, France, with my husband and two children. After graduating from the American University of Paris with a diploma in business administration, I and my husband decided to immediately get married and start our family. We have a precocious 2-year-old girl named Juliette and a jolly baby boy named Maximilien. Using my experience from working in massage while in school, I have developed a company that specializes in at home well-being and spa services. The company is called Delight, and I have been fortunate enough to run Delight from home, allowing me to care for my children during their precious beginning years. Although Delight does not directly work with the environment, the company strives to be carbon footprint free! We use all organic French-made products, our electric appliances are set up to be easily unplugged when not in use, and nothing is recycled until it has been reused.

Having children is a great moment to renew the principles of conservation and respect for the environment in even the most banal tasks. Children completely revamp a house. They provide the canvas and the inspiration to develop better habits. So far, we have been able to completely restructure our diet to be based on seasonality and local products; meat and dairy products are few, and we use only free-range chicken and meat.

I am excited for my children that they might be raised, as I was, in an atmosphere of hope for the planet and progression for humankind. The Global 500 Laureates have provided the seeds of inspiration for my actions and a base from which to glean green living advice. Having kids has made my commitment to the environment my life!

Cassandra Potier Watkins
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Turtles in Trouble

In cooperation with MEDASSET (Laureate 1987), the Marine Conservation Society has produced the short animated training DVD Turtles in Trouble for Mediterranean tourists and tour representatives from the UK. The cartoon’s light-hearted approach has a very serious message. As millions of UK tourists prepare to visit the Mediterranean, endangered marine turtles in Greece, Crete, Cyprus, and Turkey face an uncertain future as a result of insensitive tourism development and practices. Tourists play a key role in the protection of the Mediterranean’s endangered marine turtle populations at popular holiday destinations.

Turtles in Trouble can be viewed at http://www.mcsuk.org/marineworld/turtles/turtles+and+tourism.

Six of the remaining seven marine turtle species are now listed as endangered. MEDASSET reports that on the Greek island of Zakynthos, a popular holiday destination and home to the Mediterranean’s largest nesting colony of endangered loggerhead turtles, hotels, discos, and bars have been built illegally behind some of the most important nesting beaches. In Crete, the light pollution from dense tourism development behind Hania and Rethymno nesting beaches has led to volunteers having to erect tunnels from the turtle nests to the sea to prevent the emerging hatching turtles from being attracted to the electric lights.

MEDASSET (Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles) was founded in 1988 and is an international charity working for the study and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats throughout the Mediterranean, through scientific research, environmental education, political lobbying, and raising public awareness.

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Riding New Technological Waves

By Calestous Juma (1993 Laureate)

In a critique of the XO laptop (widely known as the $100 laptop), a senior computer industry official once said the effort was like seeking to replace modern cars with faster “horses.”

The XO is admittedly slower than other laptops. While the speed and price of the horse matters, what is important is getting African children to learn how to rise and use “horses” of all types to meet their educational needs.

The real test will be the extent to which African leaders, entrepreneurs, and development agencies can harness the power of emerging educational technologies and modernize the continent’s educational systems. More specifically, they should start to invest in developing the content needed for the technologies. Africa’s early entry into content development will help to put the technologies to effective use.

Technology can serve as a new platform enabling authors to get their manuscripts into a digital format without having to go through the traditional publishing process. In fact, the long process of book publishing has been a major barrier to the modernization of educational curricula in Africa.

The student of the future will be a self-learner armed with a wide range of educational technologies. The “classroom” will become as open as the modern office is today. The urgent task is for Africa to find a way to lead by developing appropriate content. It is only by doing so that the continent can hope to ride the technological wave.

Prof. Calestous Juma (1993 Laureate) is on the board of the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) Foundation.
**Kids4Earth**

The Global 500 Forum and Laurel Springs School (1990 Laureate) are proud to introduce Kids4Earth, our first online environmental curriculum for grades 6–8. This integrated core science curriculum offers students the opportunity to learn about the environment, take action on a wide range of ecological and preservation issues, and become citizens aware of and connected to life.

During the course, students cover a wide range of environmental issues as they relate to life and the physical and Earth sciences. Each lesson focuses on the work of the Global 500 Laureates, all who have won international recognition for their achievements in bringing about environmental awareness and change. From the four corners of the Earth, environmental pioneers such as Jane Goodall and the Globetree Foundation share their stories and experiences. Through their journeys, students explore our planet and the plants, animals, and people that call it home.

This full-year course encourages students to volunteer in their local or global communities and receive “eco-credit” for their work. This action-oriented approach offers numerous cross-cultural and leadership opportunities. Students will be invited to communicate with other students and environmental organizations around the world. They will learn ways in which they can make a difference and how everyone has the ability to be an environmental hero. At the end of the course, students will be awarded an Environmental Certification of Recognition for their activities, acknowledging them as stewards and citizens of the world.

Leaders4earth, the online version for ages 14 – 18, will be available in the fall.

For more information contact: marilyn@laurelsprings.com.

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**Laurel Springs School Honored**

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) honored Laurel Springs K-12 Distance Learning School (LSS) with the NAAEE Outstanding Service to Environmental Education by an Organization at the Global Level award.

Since 1991, LSS has maintained a focus on environmental education, creating a culture for its students that promotes stewardship and activism. In 2000, LSS created Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs) to accompany its mission statement, stating that each LSS student shall become a global citizen, respecting all people and the environment. Furthering its commitment, LSS formed a chapter of the National Honor Society, focusing on education and activism related to climate change. Members complete the online Leaders4Earth environmental course and 56 hours of service and leadership.

Wishing to broaden environmental education to include students worldwide, in 2003, LSS began developing a unique 36-week online course, Kids4Earth, for 10- to 14-year-old students. Global 500 Laureates around the world enthusiastically contributed to the course’s creation. Based upon the work of these award-winning, grassroots environmentalists, the course covers a wide range of environmental issues and encourages investigation, awareness, and action.

In 2006, LSS students and teachers developed a plan to offer the course for free international distribution to underserved students through the Laurel Springs Educational Foundation (LSEF). The foundation hopes to reach 50,000 students by the year 2010.

Laurel Springs School

Marilyn Mosley Gordanier, Executive Director
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Two “fire ladies” from Germany and friends of Chumbe for a number of years were invited to come to Chumbe to build a “rocket stove” for the staff kitchen and to minimize fuel consumption and the impact on the environment. The two women also work in Tanzania, especially with women groups, to show how fuel consumption can be reduced by using an efficient stove.

In early 2007, Chumbe’s head ranger Mr. Omari Nyange went to visit an NGO on the east coast of Zanzibar. The leaders of the NGO had approached Chumbe to ask for assistance with environmental education for the local community in Jambiani. One of their long-term goals is to create a marine park in one of the lagoons inside the barrier reef in Jambiani.

In March we had the official launch of the Chumbe Challenge Environmental Award Toolkit. The toolkit is designed to encourage observation and inquiry into environmental issues and aims to promote further environmental awareness and action among local students and their communities.

Finally, new buoys to demarcate the park’s boundaries were donated by Seacology, an American NGO, and Swedish soil researchers came to Chumbe Island to make a phosphorus budget.

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Chumbe Island Update

Pesticide Expert Gert Roland Fischer in the Amazon

Brazillian ecologist Gert Roland Fischer (Laureate, 1990) recently visited the small city of Sorriso in the Amazon region state of Mato Grosso, which produces soybeans exported mostly to the United States and the European Union. The 600,000 hectare soy plantation, he reports, is sprayed with dangerous, chlorine-based pesticides imported illegally from Paraguay. The pesticides, classified by Pesticides Action Network as “the dirty dozen,” are known to cause cancer and mutations cases in human beings and animals.

Brazil is the second largest pesticide consumer on the planet. “A lot of these pesticides, return to American and European consumers as contaminated food,” Fischer writes.

Fischer is the coordinator of the Pesticides Action Network (PAN) for Brazil and the South Cone and a consultant to many nongovernmental organizations. He has helped write environmental education programs to promote regulations and supply information to the soybean growers of the Amazon region. Fischer is dedicated to ending the destruction of the rain forest by farmers who use pesticides and cheap labor to grow and harvest their crops.

Contact Fischer if you have information about a clean development mechanism that follows the Kyoto Protocol.

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MALAYSIAN ACTIVIST RECEIVES GANDHI-KING-IKEDA PEACE AWARD

Malaysian civil society activist Anwar Fazal (Laureate 1988) has been awarded the Gandhi-King-Ikeda Peace Award from Morehouse College, a leading Black American University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

The award honored Fazal’s “innovations and tireless endeavors to advocate for the welfare of consumers and the protection of the environment,” and described him as “a giant in the effort to preserve the health and well-being of the inhabitants of our planet.”


The Peace Award was created to celebrate the lives and work of three men: Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, a leading Buddhist philosopher, educator, and social activist.

The award was conferred upon Anwar Fazal for his prolific work to protect the health and welfare of consumers worldwide and for his endeavors to promote social ethics, human rights, and environmental protection. He is described as “wonderfully embodying the noble virtues of the individuals for which this award was named.”

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BARLI DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE FOR RURAL WOMEN UPDATE

In 1992 in Rio de Janeiro during the Earth Summit the Barli Development Institute (then named Bahai Vocational Institute for Rural Women), received the Global 500 Roll of Honor award.

In 2001 the institute became an independent NGO and was renamed the Barli Development Institute for Rural Women. Barli is a very common name among the tribal women in the districts where many trainees come from. Barli denotes the central wooden pillar that supports the tribal house built in these rural areas, highlighting the belief of the institute that women are the central pillars of society.

The organic growth of the institute has enabled it to develop a comprehensive curriculum that empowers the women with the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives and the lives of their families and the communities in which they live. As one of the leading NGOs involved in environmental concerns and activities in central India, the Barli Institute would like to stay in touch with the other Global 500 Laureates.

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YAWA Attends International Polar Year Meeting

Khadijah Abdul Rahman of YAWA (2001 Laureate) attended the International Polar Year (IPY) meeting in Cambridge last summer. The meeting was very productive, and Rahman was asked to lead the IPY global community to create awareness of the life in the polar regions to communities in the nonpolar regions.

Rahman said the first thing was to begin collaboration between the Ice Station Antarctica Exhibition in Malaysia and his country’s natural history museum and the national science center. Rahman also used YAWA’s efforts to curb global warming through its Keep Planting Trees Program as an activity to be adopted globally through the IPY Global Community Programme.

Rahman also is working to build a network for the IPY global community to contribute news and information about activities that help promote the IPY and the understanding of climate change and global warming. He invites Global 500 Laureates to contribute.

Latest News from Globetree

Continuing its work to unite children in caring for their world, the Globetree Foundation (2000 Laureate) is gearing up for the World Championship in Cooperation (WorldCiC) 2-6 June, in Kampala, Uganda. The Globetree people working in Uganda have been affected by violence in neighboring Kenya. Still these Laureates work on.

The world needs to focus on cooperation, and now Globetree is focusing on having young participants from Kenya work together with their mayors. Globetree wants to ensure children and young persons from different areas of Kenya can share their visions and views on their future. Globetree believes the world needs a mobilization of the new ideas and the new ways of the young ones. It is obvious that many of the old ways don't work.

After the WorldCiC program in Kampala and Entebbe, a large delegation of participants will gather at the Children’s Meeting Place at UNEP, Nairobi (Kenya). The children will convey their commitments and visions to the United Nations and the messages will later be brought to UNEP Children’s Conference in Stavanger, Norway.

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YAWA is perhaps best known for its long-term public awareness project, the Keep Planting Trees Program, which aims for the people, corporations, and NGOs of Malaysia and the world to adopt the concept of continuously planting trees as a way of life.

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Committed to changing Young Lives

Khadijah Abdul Rahman
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On World Environment Day 2007, the Global 500 Roll of Environmental Honour celebrated its 20th anniversary and the Global 500 Forum celebrated its 15th anniversary.

The Global 500, launched in 1987, includes such luminaries as Professor Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner, and noted primatologist Jane Goodall. Many of the Laureates continue to devote impressive portions of their lives to such global concerns as climate change, deforestation, ocean pollution, dumping of toxic waste, and the conservation of biodiversity.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said, “In a globalized world of increasing environmental challenges and opportunities, the Global 500 Laureates serve as beacons catalyzing action and devising creative solutions to the sustainability issues of our age.”

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Laureates established the Global 500 Environmental Forum, making it possible for Laureates to support and communicate with one another, keeping alive the important resource the Global 500 Laureates represent.

A press release issued by the United Nations Environment Programme marked this significant goal and honored the long-standing relationship between our Laureates and UNEP. We encourage you to read the release at http://www.global500.org/news_218.html and consider adding the link to your website.
The Global 500 Environmental Forum Depends on You!

The Global 500 Forum is funded solely by its members. Please complete this membership form and make donations payable to the Global 500 Environmental Forum:

MY COMMITMENT:
☐ Yes I have included my e-mail for the Global 500 database.
☐ Yes I am a Global 500 Laureate, and you can count on a donation from me.

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