

FOREST HEROES AWARD CEREMONY



**INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF FORESTS • 2011**

Celebrating Forests for People

www.un.org/forests

FOREWORD

Forests are a mirror of evolving human needs, one that is dynamic and ever-changing. They are a cornerstone of the entire landscape, linking the environment, economic and social aspects. Forests are an essential source of livelihoods, food, water, and medicine for 1.6 billion people, a quarter of the world's population.

Where forests are sustainably managed and utilized, they can contribute significantly to alleviating poverty and creating forest-based enterprises and services. The International Year of Forests brought people back into the forests. The theme of the International Year of Forests has been "Forests for People," celebrating the central role of people in sustainable management of all the world's forests. To celebrate individuals who are dedicating their lives to sustaining forests, the UNFF Secretariat launched the Forest Heroes Programme and Awards.

The winners of the 2011 Forest Heroes Award initiated inspiring projects with local, national and global impacts. They have inspired governments, private institutions and local communities to work toward protecting one of the critical life support systems of our planet. The Forest Heroes we honour this year have worked tirelessly to ensure that future generations benefit from the fruits of their labour.



Ms. Jan L. McAlpine
Director

United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat

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FOREST HEROES PROGRAMME & AWARDS



“ALL 7 BILLION PEOPLE ON EARTH HAVE THEIR PHYSICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH TIED TO FORESTS.”

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The year’s theme of “Forests for People,” highlights the value of forests and their economic and social relationship with humankind. Achieving a sustainable future requires a landscape approach; a shift from simply maximizing only the economic or environmental benefits to optimizing the social, economic and environmental benefits of forests within the broader landscape, including agriculture, mountains, drylands, rivers, wetlands, biodiversity and people. More importantly, such a paradigm shift requires the passion, innovation and strategy of everyday people.

There are countless individuals around the world who dedicate their lives to nurturing forests in quiet and heroic ways. These people are Forest Heroes and to honour them, the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat launched the Forest Heroes Programme and Awards.

Ninety nominations from forty-one countries were received—the regional breakdown: Asia (24); Africa (20); Latin America and the Caribbean (18); Europe (15) and North America (13). The heroes come from different walks of life, and their goals are equally diverse. Whether they are protecting the habitat of endangered species, engaging communities or teaching children the importance forests, each of these heroes has demonstrated their ability to effect positive change.

The winners from five geographic regions come from: Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Russia, and the United States of America. Their stories and work are featured on the Forests 2011 website .

For more information, please visit: www.un.org/forests

THE JURY



The Forest Heroes jury was composed of senior officials from international organisations, who have extensive experience in forests and environmental issues.



**Jan L. McAlpine, Director
United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFFS)**

Ms. McAlpine was appointed by the Secretary-General in November 2008 to head the UNFFS, which addresses all aspects of forests. Previously, she served as Senior Advisor and lead for Forests in the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC, and in that role headed the interagency and stakeholder process in the development of the President's Initiative Against Illegal Logging. Her time with the U.S. government also includes her work at the White House, first with the President's Council on Sustainable Development and then in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative as a negotiator on issues relating to forests and timber. She also served as a Visiting Scholar and Senior Researcher at the University of Michigan's School for Natural Resources and Environment.



**Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director General
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**

Dr. Eduardo Rojas-Briales serves as Assistant Director-General for the Forestry Department of the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which works to balance social, economic and environmental objectives so that present generations can reap the benefits of the Earth's forest resources while preserving them to meet the needs of future generations. Dr. Rojas-Briales has previously acted as Vice Dean and Professor at the Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry, of the Polytechnic University of Valencia. He has served previously as a university professor, researcher and director of a forest owners association, as well as a consultant in forest policy. Dr. Rojas-Briales has also been a member of European Forest Institute's (EFI) Scientific Advisory Board and closely involved in initiation of EFI's Project Centre Medforex in Solsona, Spain. He is also the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).



**Frances Seymour, Director General
Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)**

Ms. Seymour has held positions with some of the world's leading organizations working at the interface between environment and development. Her links to the forests of Southeast Asia date back to the mid-1980s, when she studied agroforestry projects in the Philippines for USAID, and continued with her work promoting social forestry as a Ford Foundation Program Officer based in Indonesia. Before joining CIFOR, Frances was the founding Director of the World Resources Institute's (WRI) highly regarded Institutions and Governance Program, and Director of Development Assistance Policy at the World Wildlife Fund. Ms. Seymour has published analyses of forest policy, the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability into development finance, and most recently, REDD+. She is highly regarded for her skill in communicating research results to policy makers and practitioners.



**Emmanuel Ze Meka, Executive Director
International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)**

Mr. Ze Meka was appointed Executive Director of ITTO in June 2007. He is a national of Cameroon whose work with ITTO has focused on forest industry and sustainable forest management for nearly twenty years. Mr. Ze Meka worked for the Government of Cameroon from 1977-1991. During his tenure there, he served as Technical Director of the Cameroon Wood Promotion Center where he focused on the promotion of lesser timber species and vocational training in wood science and technology. He then went on to oversee the planning and supervision of the development of the national forestry sector as Director of the Forest Department of Cameroon. Today, he guides the strategic direction of ITTO, overseeing the organization's extensive work in the tropics.



**Jan A. Hartke, Consultant
Clinton Foundation**

Mr. Hartke joined the Clinton Climate Initiative in August 2006, specializing in energy efficiency, clean energy and agroforestry issues as they effect climate change and poverty reduction. He has been working on global environmental issues, including climate change, for twenty-five years. Mr. Hartke's work with the Clinton Climate Initiative established the Carbon Poverty Reduction Program which determines forest and land use opportunities to sequester carbon and reduce the threat of climate change. He has served as President of the Global Tomorrow Coalition, and Executive Director of EarthVoice. Currently, he serves on President Obama's Enterprise for the America's Board of Directors, which administers the Tropical Forest Conservation Act and as an Adviser to Mr. Zukang Sha, the Secretary General of Rio + 20 and Under Secretary General of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Africa: Mr. Paul Nzegha Mzeka (Cameroon)



Director of Apiculture and Nature Conservation Organization "ANCO"

Born and raised in a forest community, Paul N. Mzeka has a deep attachment to forest and trees.

He strongly believes this attachment influenced his preference for nature related school subjects throughout his school life, ending in his specialization as a geography teacher.

After teaching for 30 years, Mr. Mzeka retired from the Cameroon Public Service in 1990 and founded an organization called the North West Beefarmers' Association (NOWEBA) which promoted sustainable bee farming as a means of raising awareness in biodiversity conservation in rural communities.

During this period, he was improving his own understanding of the issues at stake in biodiversity conservation by attending workshops and seminars on the environment. In 2000, he and his dedicated team decided to change the name of the organization from NOWEBA to ANCO, the Apiculture and Nature Conservation.

ANCO, in 2004 created a partnership with 3 other NGOs and embarked on conservation integrated with sustainable land management and rural poverty reduction. Their approach received support from the Cameroon Government through the RIGC Project, the Program for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, South West Region and from several international organizations including UNDP (GEF/SGP), HELVETAS the Swiss Development Organization, IUCN Netherlands, the Royal Botanic Gardens UK, the American Global Releaf etc.

Mr. Mzeka and his dedicated team have helped 30 communities to protect their watersheds and conserve 4 community forests including reforesting degraded portions. In the process, a total of 685,000 trees have been planted, the target being to reach a million trees before 2013.

Asia: Mr. Shigeatsu Hatakeyama (Japan)

Founder of “Kaki no Mori wo Shitau Kai” (Rebuilding from Land to Sea, a Society to Protect Forests for Oysters)



Shigeatsu Hatakeyama is a fisherman turned environmentalist who has cultivated his oyster business by planting trees in the forest surrounding Kesenuma Bay in Miyagi, an area of Japan devastated by the March 2011 tsunami. He is known as “Grandpa Oyster,” after spending more than twenty years developing the forest environment that keeps the Okawa River clean and his oysters healthy.

Mr. Hatakeyama entered his family’s oyster raising business in the 1960s during an outbreak of red tide plankton. The event caused the water to become clouded, which dyed the oyster meat red and made it unsuitable for consumption.

The tide would turn during a trip to France in 1984. As he travelled upriver from the tidelands of the Loire river estuary where healthy oysters were raised, Mr. Hatakeyama observed a gigantic deciduous broadleaf forest in the upper reaches. It was then that he realized the positive influence forests have on the ocean environment and biodiversity.

In 1989 he held the first “Mori wa Umi no Koibito” (Forests are Lovers of the Sea) Campaign. Gaining the cooperation of the mayors of the villages along the Okawa River, he and his colleagues planted broadleaf trees upstream to reduce pollutants flowing into the sea. The yearly afforestation activities he initiated have since gained momentum, leading to a region-wide proactive movement to preserve the environment, including water drainage regulation and promotion of farming practices with less agricultural chemicals.

In 2009, he established the NPO “Mori wa Umi no Koibito” to provide hands-on education for children, bringing them closer to the ocean and forests to experience nature’s work.

Europe: Mr. Anatoly Lebedev (Russia)

Chairman for the Bureau for Regional Outreach Campaigns “BROC”



Anatoly Lebedev began his career in environmental journalism in the 1970s. In 1989 he led a successful media campaign against a construction project that threatened the territory of indigenous people and Siberian tigers in the Ussuri Forest.

Mr. Lebedev’s work with environmental group, “Taiga,” resulted in a national logging ban on cedar forests from the Supreme Soviet Council of the USSR. Soon after, he was elected Deputy Chairman of the Primorskiy Krai regional parliament where he oversaw a commission on environmental protection and resource use. In that capacity, he passed regional legislation on forest management, wildlife management, indigenous rights and protected territories, and helped keep national parks from destruction by illegal logging.

In 2000, Mr. Lebedev was awarded Honorable Environmentalist of Russia for his efforts in promoting indigenous rights, biodiversity preservation and his support of local environmental journalists through the “Bureau of Regional Outreach Campaigns” (BROC). He also produced the first regional environmental TV show, “Preserved,” and the quarterly magazine “Ecology and Business,” which has been a key tool for environmental education and advocacy over RFE-Siberia.

Mr. Lebedev remains highly active in local forest communities, analyzing models and impacts of illegal logging and timber trade, which rose in the RFE during the mid 1990s. He has written analytical reports on the Asian timber marketing collaboration with international organizations such as, IUCN, WWF and U.S. based NGOs.

To date he is consulted by journalists and international organizations on issues concerning the environment, forestry, illegal logging, conservation and sustainable communities in Asian Russia.

Latin America: Mr. Paulo Adario (Brazil)

Amazon Campaign Director for Greenpeace Brazil



Paulo Adario has acted as a guardian of the Amazon for the past 15 years.

Leading a field team focused on research and investigation, his work exposed the timber industry as the first in a number of drivers of destruction in the Amazon rainforest.

In 2001, he led a field team into the Amazon to assist the Deni tribe to demarcate and protect their own land, resulting in the official protection of 1,6 million hectares of pristine forest. Mr. Adario also introduced new concepts, such as the 'Green Wall' to describe the network of protected areas necessary to stop the northern encroachment of industrial development, and 'Zero Deforestation' – a set of political, social and economic initiatives aimed at eliminating deforestation while ensuring the improvement of living conditions for people living in and from the forests.

Following a campaign on illegal logging, which led to a moratorium in 2003 on the international trade in Mahogany, the impacts of his work attracted death threats from forest criminals across the Amazon. Mr. Adario persisted and went on to create bilateral agreements with international and industrial companies to halt the illegal destruction of the forests for soya crops and cattle ranching. The resulting Soya Moratorium and cattle industry agreements are still in place today.

Mr. Adario has pioneered a campaign to protect the Amazon from boardroom meetings with industry leaders to field expeditions deep into the Amazon, to the co-ordination of international public campaigns to expose forest destroyers and demand sustainable solutions.

Mr. Adario opened Greenpeace's office in the Amazon to fight deforestation and force sustainable solutions. He currently still leads the office as the Campaign Director.

North America: Ms. Rhiannon Tomtishen & Ms. Madison Vorva (USA)

Founders of Project O.R.A.N.G.S.



In 2007, as 11 year olds, Madison and Rhiannon earned their Girl Scout Bronze Award by raising awareness about the endangered orangutan and their rapid diminishing rainforest habitat in Indonesia and Malaysia.

After learning that the Girl Scout Cookies they sold for so many years contained palm oil, an ingredient that results in rainforest destruction and human rights abuses, the two girls launched a variety of campaigns in order to convince the Girl Scout organization to remove this ingredient from their cookies. They worked to educate consumers about the impacts of palm oil and motivate them to take action by demanding deforestation-free products.

In the fall of 2011, Girl Scouts USA announced their new palm oil policy, the first concrete action they've taken on this issue. Now juniors in high school, Madison and Rhiannon have finally gained the opportunity to enter a dialogue with the Girl Scout organization and are committed to ensuring that Girl Scout Cookies are produced in an environmentally-friendly and socially-responsible way. They are also expanding their campaign to persuade Kelloggs, a baker of Girl Scout cookies, and Cargill, a major player in the palm oil market, to adopt sustainable policies of their own.

After a recent trip to Colombia to learn about the human rights abuses occurring as a result of palm oil corporations, the girls have made it their mission to not only advocate for the rainforests that are destroyed for palm oil, but for the inhabitants of these tropic forests whose livelihoods rely on this invaluable resource. As youth, Madison and Rhiannon have fought to make their voices heard and show other youth the tremendous power they have to make a difference. It is their belief that with courage, passion, and perseverance, any person, regardless of their age, can create change within their local and international communities.

SPECIAL AWARD

In Special Recognition of Mr. José Claudio Ribeiro da Silva and Ms. Maria do Espírito Santo da Silva (Brazil) (Deceased)



Rainforest Activists

A tree nut harvester by trade, José Claudio Ribeiro da Silva and his wife, Maria do Espírito Santo da Silva, are remembered as rainforest activists and environmentalists who campaigned against illegal logging and clear-cutting of trees in the Amazon rainforest.

Ribeiro da Silva originally worked as a community leader at a forest reserve that produced sustainable forest products, such as oils and nuts.

The couple was known to utilize their deep local knowledge to sustainably conserve, protect and manage the forests they called home.

The da Silvas became anti-logging activist when illegal loggers began to encroach further into untouched areas of Pará, their largely forested home state in northern Brazil. Members of the media describe them as “tenacious Amazon defenders” who were known to block roads, stop logging trucks, file grievances for neighbors whose lands had been invaded and denounce illegal loggers to Brazil’s environmental agency.

Ribeiro da Silva’s speeches and campaigns, though based on local issues, held a more universal perspective. He is described as a powerful speaker, always willing to participate in local, national and international conferences.

In November 2010, Ribeiro da Silva spoke at a TEDx Amazon event in Manaus despite regularly receiving threats against his and his wife’s lives. He was quoted for saying, “I could be here today talking to you and in one month you will get the news that I disappeared. I will protect the forest at all costs.”

Sadly, on May 24, 2011, José Cláudio Ribeiro da Silva and Maria do Espírito Santo were killed in an ambush attack not far from their home in Nova Ipixuna, Pará - in the settlement of Maçaranduba 2.

To celebrate the International Year of Forests, 2011, the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat set out to identify the “unsung” heroes who dedicate their lives to sustaining, protecting and conserving forests. The first International Forest Heroes Programme and Awards honours everyday people, showing that it is possible for everyone to make a positive change for forests.

Since its creation in 2000, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) has promoted a landscape approach to all aspects of forests, recognizing the need to widen the sustainable management of forests well beyond deforestation and afforestation, integrating their economic, environmental and social values. The Forum has universal membership, and is composed of all 193 Member States of the United Nations and specialized agencies.

The UNFF Secretariat was requested by the UN General Assembly to serve as the focal point for the International Year of Forests 2011, in collaboration with Governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, major groups and other relevant organizations.



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