

PEOPLE

2005 Goldman Environmental Prize Winners

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Corneille Ewango



Isidro Baldenegro López



Father José Andrés Tamayo Cortes



Chavannes Jean-Baptiste



Kaisha Atakhanova



Stephanie Roth

Credit: Goldman Environmental Awards

Ahmed Djoghlaf of Algeria has been appointed Executive Secretary of the Convention On Biological Diversity (CBD). He succeeds Hamdallah Zedan of Egypt as head of the Convention's secretariat, based in Montreal. Mr Djoghlaf has been Director of the United Nations Environment Programme/ Global Environment Facility in Nairobi since 1996. Klaus Toepfer, UNEP's Executive Director, said: "He has truly transformed our role within the Global Environment Facility and will be sorely missed. But our loss is the CBD's gain. Mr Djoghlaf has the skills, the intellect and experience to take this important convention forward into the 21st century."



UNEP

Svein Tveitdal has been appointed Special Advisor to the Executive Director of UNEP on Polar/Nordic issues in response to the increased importance of the polar ecosystems in a global environmental context. Director of UNEP's Divisions for Policy Implementation and Environmental Conventions from June 2003 to June 2005, he will be co-located at its Polar Centre GRID-Arendal in Norway, where he was Managing Director between 1992 and 2003. He has had longstanding personal and professional interests in the Arctic, whose ecosystems are now threatened by climate change, contamination and wilderness fragmentation, and have become important barometers of global environmental change.



UNEP

James Leape, who has directed the conservation and science initiatives of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation since 2001, has been appointed Director General of WWF International, succeeding Dr. Claude Martin, who retires after 12 years at the helm of the organisation in December.

Corneille Ewango stayed in the vital Okapi Reserve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to protect it during the recent civil war, when most of its senior staff fled. He hid the Reserve's herbarium collection, computers, research and data in the forest - and sometimes had to hide himself to save his life - but he also directly confronted military commanders to stop their soldiers poaching its wildlife. With the support of some 1,500 local people, he managed to preserve the Reserve, a crucial part of the Ituri Forest, which is home to many rare species and the Mbuti people, commonly known as pygmies. His brave persistence won him the 2005 Goldman Environmental Prize for Africa.

The prizes - founded by **Richard N. Goldman** and his late wife **Rhoda H. Goldman** in 1990 - are the world's foremost honours for grassroots environmental activists, six of whom annually receive \$125,000, the largest awards of their kind. Others of this year's prizes were also awarded for protecting biodiversity. **Isidro Baldenegro López**, of Chihuahua Mexico - a subsistence farmer and community leader of the indigenous Tarahumara people - has spent much of his life defending its priceless forests from logging despite, as a boy, witnessing the assassination of his own father for taking a similar stand. In 2003 he was arrested on trumped-up charges and spent 15 months in jail, but his work has led to logging bans throughout the Sierra Madre region of the country.

Father José Andrés Tamayo Cortes, a charismatic priest, directs a coalition that has fought uncontrolled commercial logging in Honduras and exerted pressure on its government to reform its national forest policy. And **Chavannes Jean-Baptiste** has reached more than 200,000 people across Haiti, teaching the principles of sustainable agriculture and techniques to combat erosion in the heavily deforested country.

The two other prizes were won by **Kaisha Atakhanova**, who led a successful campaign to prevent nuclear waste being imported into the Republic of Kazakhstan, and **Stephanie Roth**, who has been the driving force behind an international campaign to stop the construction of Europe's largest open-cast gold mine in Romania. **Nancy Pelosi**, Democratic Leader in the US House of Representatives, said: "the leadership and commitment of the winners will protect our environment for future generations."