

# people

Dr. **BALGIS OSMAN-ELASHA**, the winner of the Champions of the Earth award for Africa,



is a senior scientist from Sudan who is at the forefront of global research on climate change. A leading author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, she has produced groundbreaking work on global warming in Africa, with an emphasis on northern and eastern Africa. Dr. Osman-Elasha's work is of vital relevance given the strong links between climate change and conflict in Sudan. The award also recognizes Dr. Osman-Elasha's efforts to educate Sudanese university students about climate change, thus raising awareness among the country's new generation.

The 2008 Champion of the Earth for Asia and the Pacific comes from Bangladesh, a country highly vulnerable to climate change and flooding.

Dr. **ATIQ RAHMAN**, Executive Director of the



Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies is an eloquent advocate for sustainable development. He has transformed the NGO into a leading think-tank on sustainable development issues in South Asia. As one of the most highly respected and referenced specialists in his field, with extensive publications

on environment and development in Bangladesh, Dr. Rahman has helped to raise awareness of the hazards of global warming throughout Asia.

One of His Serene Highness **PRINCE ALBERT II**'s first acts as sovereign of Monaco was to sign the Kyoto Protocol — an eloquent indication of his longstanding commitment to the environment. Prince Albert II, the 2008 Champion of the Earth for Europe, has been a prominent voice on environmental issues since the early 1990s. Prince Albert's involvement in raising awareness on climate change includes leading an expedition to the North Pole in 2006 to draw attention to the consequences of global warming. The Prince



Albert II of Monaco Foundation, which he created in 2006, works to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. Prince Albert is also a patron of the Billion Tree Campaign, which successfully led to the planting of more than a billion trees across the planet in 2007.

For the last 30 years, **TIMOTHY E. WIRTH** — the 2008 Champion of the Earth for North America — has been an advocate for the environment in the United States. During his time as US Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Mr. Wirth — a



strong supporter of the Kyoto Protocol — was instrumental in raising awareness and calling for policy action on global warming. As the president of the UN Foundation and Better World Fund, Mr. Wirth has established the environment as a key priority, and is mobilizing resources to address crucial issues from biodiversity to climate change and renewable energy. Mr. Wirth was also a steadfast advocate on environmental issues during his time as a member of the US Senate, when he authored the Colorado Wilderness Bill as well as other successful legislation on energy, conservation and environmental protection.

H.E. **LIZ THOMPSON**, the Champion of the Earth for Latin America and the Caribbean, has become one of the recognized leaders on environmental issues in Small Island Developing States. During her time as Minister of Energy and the Environment of Barbados, she enacted a range of progressive policies for sustainable development and environmental protection. She also became a key voice raising awareness of global warming in Barbados and has played a role in environmental awareness and protection across the Caribbean



region. She has encouraged Small Island Development States to diversify their economies, undertake sustainability assessments, and promote community-based programmes that have positive environmental impacts.

H.E. **ABDUL-QADER BA-JAMMAL** has had a truly pioneering influence on environmental protection in Yemen — a country which faces acute challenges from water scarcity to desertification. During his time as Minister and then Prime Minister, he established Yemen's Ministry of Water and Environment and Environment Protection Authority and implemented a series of groundbreaking environmental policies in Yemen



and the region. The 2008 Champion of the Earth for West Asia has also orchestrated conservation efforts for the Socotra archipelago, a site of global importance for biodiversity, and established a state agency for the development of Yemeni islands with a focus on the conservation of marine resources.

By setting a carbon neutral goal for New Zealand, Prime Minister **HELEN CLARK** is blazing new trails in the fight against climate change. Helen Clark's policy initiatives to make her country greener have earned her the UNEP Special Prize in this year's Champions of the Earth awards. The Prime Minister's policies promote renewable energy and energy efficiency across key sectors of the economy, with initiatives including the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy. Helen Clark's government is also achieving substantial advances on environmental protection, from forestry and agriculture to improving public awareness and boosting private sector involvement in



sustainability. Aptly enough, New Zealand will be hosting this year's World Environment Day on 5 June with the slogan 'Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy'.