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## **UNESCO honours young scientists for biodiversity conservation**



4 June 2010 – Budding scientists from around the world whose interests range from environmental conservation in Argentina to land use and carbon storage in Ghana have been recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) for their work on biodiversity.

Ten people have been selected as winners of UNESCO's 2010 Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Young Scientist Awards, according to a statement released today by the Paris-based agency. Each laureate will receive a cash prize of up to \$5,000 to start his or her career by researching ecosystems, natural resources and biodiversity.

This year's award recipients include HaiQian Li of China, who was recognized for work on sustainable economic development by comparing the Lake Heilongjiang Xingkai biosphere reserve near the Russian border with the Miyun water resource reserve in Beijing.

Another winner, Salama El Fatehi of Morocco, has been evaluating the genetic resources of *Vesce vicia ervilia* or "bitter vetch," a threatened ancient grain legume species that grows in the Mediterranean Intercontinental biosphere reserve in Morocco and Spain.

All the work is carried out in biosphere reserves, sites recognized under UNESCO's MAB Programme for taking innovative approaches to conservation, ecological sciences and sustainable development. There are currently 564 such sites in more than 100 countries.

In addition, Fabio Kalesnik of Argentina has received the Michel Batisse grant, awarded for biosphere reserve management case studies for his work in the Delta del Paraná Biosphere reserve, which covers the delta of the Paraná River running through Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay.

Two scientists – Philista Malaki of Kenya and Sri Astutik of Indonesia – will share special awards funded by the Austrian MAB Committee for their work on socio-economics of the mangrove-dominated wetlands in the Malindi-Watamu biosphere reserve and carbon stock linked to plant diversity in the volcanic Mount Gede Pangrango National Park in West Java respectively.

Austria is presenting these awards as part of the International Year of Biodiversity, designated by the General Assembly to promote the protection of the planet's species and habitats.

Biodiversity will also comprise a special thematic session at the annual high-level debate this September in New York.

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