



UNESCO unveils winners of three prizes for science



5 November 2009 – An Indian professor, a Vietnamese professor, a Tunisian expert in water management and the organization responsible for Spain’s national park system are the winners of three awards announced today by the head of the United Nations agency tasked with promoting science.

Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**), presented the prizes in Budapest, Hungary, where the three-day World Science Forum has opened.

The annual Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science has been jointly awarded to Yash Pal of India and Trinh Xuan Thuan of Viet Nam, UNESCO said in a **press release**.

Professor Pal was recognized for his participation in many Indian television programmes that deal with popular science, including Turning Point and Science is everywhere. He also helped establish the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics in Pune and the Centre for Educational Communication in Ahmedabad.

Professor Trinh is a world-renowned astrophysicist who in 2004 discovered the youngest known galaxy in the universe. He has written more than 200 academic articles on galaxies and authored a series of books, including an illustrated history of the Big Bang and a dialogue with the Buddhist monk Matthieu Ricard.

Mr. Matsuura announced that the Great Man-Made River International Water Prize for Arid and Semi-Arid Zones, awarded every two years, has been given to Bellachheb Chahbani.

Dr. Chahbani has spent more than 25 years at the Institute of Arid Regions in Médenine, Tunisia, and his research has helped improve water management and optimize irrigation systems by reducing evaporation and run-off.

The Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation, handed out every two years on the recommendation of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO’S Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, has been issued to Spain’s Autonomous Authority for National Parks (known by its Spanish acronym as OAPN).

The authority, which falls under the Spanish ministry of environment, rural and marine areas, runs the national park system and promotes international cooperation on the management of protected areas.

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