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Two national presidents among this year's winners of top UN environment award



22 April 2010 – The Presidents of Guyana and Maldives are among six winners from government, science, business and entertainment to be awarded this year's United Nations Champions of the Earth prize today for their leadership in environmental conservation.

The winners, **announced** by Achim Steiner, Under-Secretary-General and UN Environment Programme (**UNEP**) Executive Director, include President Bharrat Jagdeo of Guyana, who is a passionate forestry and ecosystem infrastructure proponent, and Maldivian President Mohamed Nasheed, an international climate change campaigner.

Afghanistan's Director General of the National Environmental Protection Agency and sustainability advocate, Prince Mostapha Zaher, and Japanese earth scientist and pioneer of research into how the oceans cycle carbon, Taro Takahashi, are also on the winners' list.

Chinese actress Zhou Xun received the award for her reputation as a green lifestyle guru. Through her "tips for green living" initiative, Ms. Xun encourages people to reduce their carbon print through simple changes in lifestyle.

United States venture capitalist and Sun Microsystems co-founder Vinod Khosla was recognized for his efforts as a green energy entrepreneur. In September 2009, Mr. Khosla's venture capital firm announced it had raised \$1.1 billion for a "green fund" that would be used to spur development of renewable energy and other clean technologies.

The trophies were presented at a gala event in Seoul to mark International Mother Earth Day, in conjunction with the Business for the Environment Global Summit in the capital of the Republic of Korea, which is being attended by more than 1,000 representatives from business, government, and civil society.

“The six winners represent some of the key pillars upon which society can build green growth and a development path to unite rather than divide six billion people,” said Mr. Steiner.

The Champions of the Earth, an international environment award established in 2004, recognizes achievements in areas of entrepreneurial vision, policy and leadership, science and innovation, inspiration and action. The year’s awards had a special category for biodiversity and ecosystems management. To date, the award has recognized 34 outstanding environmental leaders.

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