

Afterword

A decade has passed since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Now in August 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (known as Rio+10) is scheduled to open in Johannesburg, South Africa. At this meeting, agreement is expected to be reached at the heads-of-state level on “measures that provide compatibility between development and environmental protection in the 21st century.”

The Asahi Glass Foundation established the Blue Planet Prize and awarded the first prize in 1992, the year of the Earth Summit. Since the second year of the prize, the awards ceremony has been attended by Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino.

Over the 10 years since its inception, the scope of the prize has been extended to new fields, and we have recognized achievers from 10 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, India, the People’s Republic of China, Russia and Australia. The prize has continued to gain in prestige and prominence throughout this period.

This publication commemorating the most recent five years of the Blue Planet Prize (years six to 10)—a sequel to the first commemorative publication (years one to five) published in 1997—contains lectures by each of the 10 prize winners on the occasion of receiving the Blue Planet Prize. The laureates were kind enough to give of their time to contribute essays about the environment and recent developments in their fields. We thank them for their cooperation and generosity in contributing to this volume. Their lectures and essays are a valuable resource and give important guidance on what we can and must do to find solutions to global environmental problems.

Since 1992, the Foundation has also conducted an annual opinion survey, the “*Questionnaire on Environmental Problems and the Survival of Humankind!*” Each year, the results of this survey are analyzed and compiled into a published report—a 10-year summary of which appears in this commemorative publication. We hope that the survey’s findings on views about environmental policies and humanity’s current predicament will be useful for readers and help stimulate further interest in environmental issues.

Although the mere fact that global environmental problems are deeply entangled with the activities of the people living on this Earth means that we face difficult problems, we are confident that we will someday be able to solve them through the ingenuity of the human race. By further developing our research assistance programs started in 1934 and commendation programs mentioned above, we hope to support the search for these solutions and contribute to a brighter 21st century. All of us at the Foundation would like to take this opportunity to thank the nominators of the candidates, the members of the selection committee and other supporters for their understanding and cooperation in making the Blue Planet Prize possible.

In closing, it is with tremendous regret that we note the passing of Mr. David R. Brower in 2000 and Prof. Mikhail I. Budyko in 2001, the recipients of the 7th Blue Planet Prize (1998). Our thoughts remain with them.

Kimihiko Sato
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