

Preface

The Earth is an irreplaceable and unique home to all living things. It is a complex system of subtle interrelationships of air, water, soil, animals, plants and microbes—a truly rare planet in our solar system.

Human beings continue to do as they please, treating the Earth as if it had an endless capacity to recover from mankind's mistreatment. We accept the blessings of the Earth, but also act as if we owned the planet in our relentless pursuit of economic growth. We have finally come to realize the Earth is beginning to suffer and are at last giving closer consideration to the problem. A variety of such phenomena as global warming, the dwindling of forest resources, crises in the ecosystem, and desertification, are becoming too visible to ignore. But we still don't understand what we should do about these problems, and have not committed ourselves to seriously protecting the Earth. If we leave things as they are, there is a danger where we could reach a point of no return. We must act before we have done an irreparable harm.

In 1992, the year of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Asahi Glass Foundation first awarded the Blue Planet Prize, an international award that recognizes individuals and organizations that have made major contributions to solving global environmental problems. In expressing its appreciation for the achievements of the winners, the Foundation hopes to raise awareness of environmental issues and stimulate interest and involvement in these issues throughout the world.

At the beginning of this year, the IPCC issued its Fourth Assessment Report. It stated that global warming was progressing even faster than previously projected, and that it will continue to worsen with time. It is projected that temperatures will rise by 0.2 degrees Celsius every 10 years by the year 2030, and if allowed to continue, the average temperature of the world is forecast to rise by 4 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. It is said that dramatic changes in the climate that typify global warming is, beyond a scientific doubt, linked to human activity. Allowing human activity to continue as is will have significant consequences for the global environment and in effect for the survival not only of humankind but all forms of life.

It can be said we are now facing a true test of human wisdom. Human beings are at a point where they must leave behind their individual and national ego to formulate a response. Individuals must change their lifestyles and countries must participate in international collaborations, both of which may be difficult to accept.

The year 2006 marked the 15th award year of the Blue Planet Prize. We are more than delighted to have been able to recognize 30 individuals and/or organizations to date that have achieved significant results on issues of the environment. It is our pleasure now to commemorate this 15th anniversary by publishing the winners' commemorative lectures and essays from the last five years in the form of this book titled *A Better Future for the Planet Earth, Vol. III*. It is a sequel to the first and second volumes published in 1997 and 2002.

I sincerely hope this publication, by making the achievements of the award recipients available to a wider audience, will serve as an aid to people working to solve environmental problems throughout the world.

The beauty of the Earth as seen from outer space is breathtaking. The Earth is invaluable and precious not only for humans, but all living beings. We cannot accept to lose our one priceless possession to human ego. Now is truly the time to gather our collective human wisdom and act upon it to protect the Earth.

Why don't we pass this beautiful and irreplaceable planet on to the next generation by taking tangible actions today?

December 2007

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hiromichi Seya". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent 'S'.

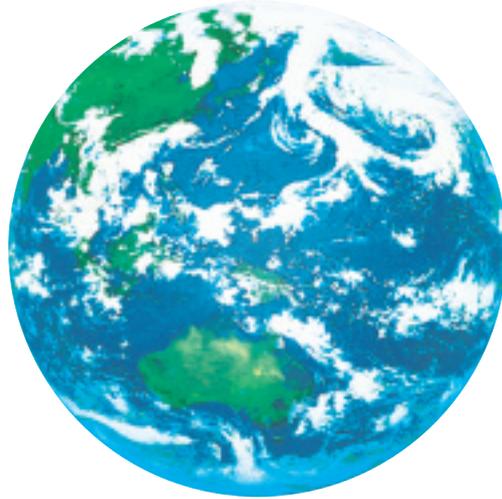
Hiromichi Seya

Chairman

The Asahi Glass Foundation



**The Earth is a precious ecosystem,
sustaining every living thing.**



At the Asahi Glass Foundation, we hope that people
around the world work toward protecting our planet from destruction,
ensuring our treasured
inheritance continues to exist for future generations.



The Blue Planet
Prize Trophy

* The Blue Planet Prize symbol, top left, represents our responsibility toward our fragile home. It is a symbol of hope for our children, of coexistence and intimate connection to our environment. This design depicts the delicate balance and dynamic interrelationship of our world: the pristine blue sky and sea, people nature and the universe.



Inaugural Blue Planet Prize Winners Announced at UNCED (1992)

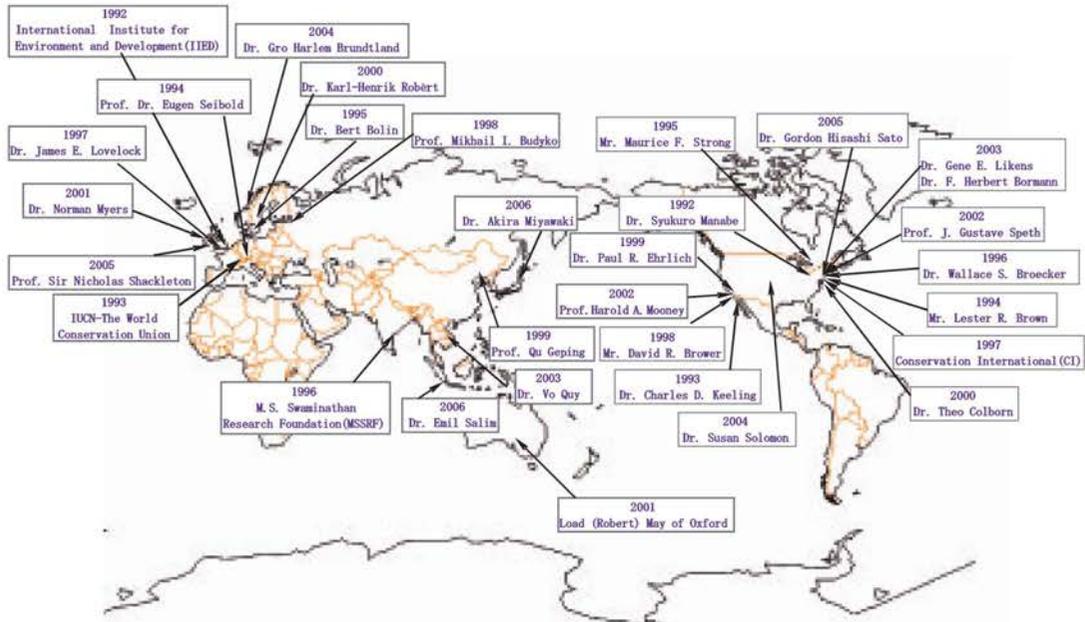
Attending the awards announcement were, from left, Richard Sandbrook, executive director of the IIED; Maurice Strong, secretary-general of UNCED; Dr. Saburo Okita, former minister of Foreign Affairs and a director of the Asahi Glass Foundation; Hideaki Yamashita, chairman of the Asahi Glass Foundation; Ambassador Masaki Seo; and Osamu Shiragami, senior executive director of the Asahi Glass Foundation.



The Blue Planet Prize originated in June of 1991 and the winners of the inaugural prize were announced during UNCED in Rio de Janeiro in June of 1992.

- * UNCED = United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
- * All personal titles refer to positions held at the time.

To date, there are thirty winners of the Blue Planet Prize from around the world



Some Background on the Blue Planet Prize

Humankind has only one home, the Earth, and we all bear responsibility to leave it in a habitable condition for future generations. In recognition of those whose efforts help provide solutions for global environmental problems, the Foundation established the Blue Planet Prize, an annual international award presented to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions toward that aim. The year the prize was first awarded, 1992, was the year that the world turned its attention to environmental issues at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In keeping with the spirit of that conference, the Foundation hopes to help raise awareness of and interest in environmental issues throughout the world while expressing its appreciation for the achievements of the winners.

Each year, the Foundation chooses two individuals or organizations whose pioneering achievements represent major contributions in sustainable development and to solving such environmental problems as climate change, global warming, acid rain, ozone layer depletion, ecosystem destruction in tropical rainforests, species extinction and desertification. The Foundation is also keen to recognize work in areas related to energy, food, population, waste treatment, recycling, as well as environmental management, ethics, philosophy and education. The work of the award winners must in some way contribute to the harmonious coexistence of people, society and the environment. They should contribute to humankind's pool of scientific knowledge as well as to the realization of a global community that uses science and technology for the good of all. Candidate nominations are received from more than 120 countries worldwide. Living citizens of all nations, irrespective of gender, race or religion, are eligible. A short list of nominees is selected by the Selection Committee. Final decisions are made by the Presentation Committee and nominees are approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors and Councillors.

The winners are presented with a certificate of merit, a commemorative trophy and a supplementary prize of 50 million yen at an awards ceremony. The ceremony takes place in Tokyo and is attended each year by members of the Japanese royal family, government officials, foreign diplomats, academics and researchers, as well as representatives from many fields of endeavor. On the day following the awards ceremony, the laureates present lectures on their work to an audience at the United Nations University in Tokyo. This lecture event is well attended by the general public, journal-

ists, environmental specialists and academics from related fields. For the past fifteen years, the Foundation has published a full transcript of the lectures. In 1997 and 2002, to commemorate the fifth and tenth anniversary of the prize, respectively, *A Better Future for the Planet Earth* and *A Better Future for the Planet Earth Vol.II* were published. Volume II is a five-year compilation of the prize winners' lectures and essays for the period from 1997 to 2001, while this volume comprises of those from 2002 to 2006.

Information on the laureates and their achievements is also available online on the Foundation's web site: <http://www.af-info.or.jp>.

The Blue Planet Prize was so named in the hope that our blue planet will be a shared possession capable of sustaining human life far into the future. The Earth is a precious ecosystem, home to every living thing. At the Asahi Glass Foundation, we sincerely hope that people around the globe will work toward protecting our planet from environmental deterioration, ensuring that the natural environment continues to exist for future generations. We believe wholeheartedly that through the ingenuity and earnest efforts of humanity the serious environmental problems we now face will someday be solved.

Blue Planet Prize Selection Process

