

PEOPLE

Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General, has been awarded the 2005 Zayed Prize for Global Leadership for the Environment for “catalyzing political and public opinion to an understanding that the environment is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development.”

This is one of three Zayed awards, which together make up the Zayed International Prize for the Environment, the world’s largest and most valuable environmental prize, worth a total of \$1 million.

The award for Scientific and/or Technical Achievement in Environment was won by the **1,360 experts of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment**, which has catalogued the condition of the globe’s ecosystems and their life-giving services.

And the award for Environmental Action Leading to Positive Change in Society has been shared between **Angela Cropper**, co-President of the Cropper Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago and **Emil Salim**, former Indonesian State Minister for Population and the Environment.

The Prize was established by **Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, Crown Prince of Dubai and United Arab Emirates Minister of Defense, to acknowledge the environmental commitment of the late **Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan**. Previous winners of the Global Leadership

award, which is worth \$500,000, have been **Jimmy Carter**, the former President of the United States, and the **British Broadcasting Corporation**.

The International Jury, chaired by **Klaus Toepfer**, UNEP’s Executive Director, said that “Mr Annan has emphasised the importance of the multilateral system in all facets of his work, convinced that global environmental challenges require global cooperation”. It noted his personal leadership at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, and reports that he requested in the run up to last year’s World Summit in New York.

And it added: “Five years ago, recognizing the potential threat that environmental degradation posed for people around the world, Mr Annan also called for the first-ever international scientific assessment of the health of the world’s ecosystems.”

It is the 1,360 experts from 95 countries who contributed to this Millennium Ecosystem Assessment who win the \$300,000 second category award. The jury called it a “landmark study on the condition of the world’s ecosystem services from fisheries and freshwaters up to the carbon capture of the world’s forests.”

It added that the Assessment “also underlines the economic importance of natural or nature’s capital and demonstrates that the degradation of ecosystems is progressing at an alarming and unsustainable rate”.

The Jury describes the Assessment as a remarkable scientific achievement which is “commanding political attention while shaping the environmental agenda of the 21st century, especially in the challenging area of ensuring nature’s capital is given real value alongside financial and human capital.”

Ms Cropper, who shares the \$200,000 third category award with Mr Salim, is a co-chair of the Assessment Panel of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Mr Salim is the chair of the board of trustees for numerous Indonesian environmental organisations.

Dr Mohamed A. Bin Fahad, Chairman of the Zayed Prize Higher Committee, said that the secretariat had received over 80 nominations for the awards from all five continents. He added that the Committee hoped that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment would use the Award money to disseminate its achievements and make them available to all world communities and policy makers.

Klaus Toepfer said: “The Jury was faced with many outstanding candidates for the Zayed Prizes. But when you look at the overall global impact on politics, business, science and civil society of Mr Annan’s environment and sustainable development-related initiatives, we came to the conclusion he is deservedly the global winner.”

He added that the winners of the other two categories “are also outstanding in their own right” and looked forward to welcoming them to the award ceremony in Dubai on 6 February ■



Kofi Annan



Angela Cropper



Emil Salim

Obituary

The United Nations Environment Programme was profoundly saddened by the sudden death in January 2006 of

His Highness **Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum**, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai. Executive Director, Klaus Toepfer, expressed his heartfelt condolences to His Highness’s family and to the leadership and people of the United Arab Emirates. The international community has lost a great leader and an ardent supporter of sustainable development.

