



PRESS RELEASE - Friday 10 February 2012

BLUE PLANET PRIZE WINNERS CALL FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A group of the world's leading scientists and experts in sustainable development today called for urgent changes to policies and institutions to enable humanity to tackle environmental crises and improve human wellbeing.

The group – all past winners of the [Blue Planet Prize](#) – have gathered in London to finalise a paper that will be launched at the UN Environment Programme's Governing Council meeting in Nairobi on 20-22 February.

In a press briefing today at the International Institute for Environment and Development, co-author Bob Watson unveiled the paper's main conclusions and recommendations.

The paper will emphasise transformational solutions to key environment and development challenges. It highlights the policies, technologies and behaviour changes required to protect the local, regional and global environment, stimulate the economy and enhance the livelihoods of the poor.

The paper ***Environmental and Development Challenges: The imperative to act*** comes ahead of the Rio+20 conference in Brazil in June, which marks the 20th anniversary of the historic UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Earth Summit).

"The challenges facing the world today need to be addressed immediately if we are to solve the problem of climate change, loss of biodiversity and poverty," says Bob Watson, who is the Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), a Blue Planet Prize winner in 2010 and a co-author of the new paper.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said:

"The paper by the Blue Planet laureates will challenge governments and society as a whole to act to limit human-induced climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in order to ensure food, water energy and human security. I would like to thank Professor Watson and colleagues for eloquently articulating their vision on how key development challenges can be addressed, emphasizing solutions; the policies, technologies and behaviour changes required to grow green economies, generate jobs and lift people out of poverty without pushing the world through planetary boundaries."

The Blue Planet Prize laureates who gathered in London to work on the paper are:

- **Professor Sir Bob Watson**, Chief Scientific Adviser of the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- **Lord (Robert) May of Oxford**, former Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Government and President of Royal Society of London
- **Professor Paul Ehrlich**, Stanford University
- **Professor Harold Mooney**, Stanford University
- **Dr. Gordon Hisashi Sato, President, Manzanar Project Corporation**
- **Professor José Goldemberg**, secretary for the environment of the State of São Paulo, Brazil and Brazil's interim Secretary of Environment during the Rio Earth Summit in 1992
- **Dr Emil Salim**, former Environment Minister of the Republic of Indonesia
- **Dr Camilla Toulmin**, Director of the International Institute for Environment and Development
- **Bunker Roy**, Founder of Barefoot College
- **Dr Syukuro Manabe**, Senior Scientist, Princeton University
- **Julia Marton-Lefevre**, Director-General of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.
- **Dr Simon Stuart**, Chair of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.
- **Dr Will Turner**, Vice President of Conservation Priorities and Outreach, Conservation International
- **Dr Karl-Henrik Robert**, Founder of The Natural Step, Sweden

ABOUT THE BLUE PLANET PRIZE

In 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, the [Asahi Glass Foundation](#) established the Blue Planet Prize, an award presented to individuals or organizations worldwide in recognition of outstanding achievements in scientific research and its application that have helped provide solutions to global environmental problems.

The Prize is offered in the hopes of encouraging efforts to bring about the healing of the Earth's fragile environment. A full list of its past winners is online [here](#).

The award's name was inspired by the remark "the Earth was blue," uttered by the first human in space, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, upon viewing our planet. The Blue Planet Prize was so named in the hopes that our blue planet will be a shared asset capable of sustaining human life far into the future.

2012 is the 20th anniversary of the Blue Planet Prize. The Asahi Glass Foundation wishes to mark this anniversary with a fresh start in its efforts to help build an environmentally friendly society.