

Preface

As we stand on the threshold of the new millennium, if we look back over history we can see that since the earliest times humankind has used the natural environment to build civilizations. Modern scientific and technological advances, together with rapid industrial progress, have brought modern lifestyles and the accompanying mass consumption of resources and energy to economically advanced parts of the world. Today, socioeconomic activities have come to have enormous implications for the global environment. Problems such as global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, deforestation, desertification, the extinction of species and loss of biological diversity, as well as issues including overpopulation and excess energy consumption threaten humanity's very prospects for survival.

The Earth is a complex system of subtle interrelationships among the air, water, soil, animals, plants, and microbes—a truly unique planet in our solar system. We have only one home, the Earth, and we have an important mission—to leave it in livable condition for future generations. We must undertake new activities as global citizens, superseding national boundaries and generational differences to view the future of the Earth from the perspective of the whole of humanity.

In 1992, the year of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Asahi Glass Foundation first awarded the Blue Planet Prize, an international prize that recognizes individuals and organizations who 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.

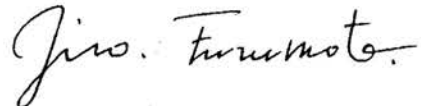
The lectures and essays of the Blue Planet Prize recipients recorded in this publication cover subjects ranging from leading scientific research on climate change and the interrelatedness of the atmosphere and oceans to the preservation of ecological and biological diversity, sustainable agriculture and aquaculture, and food supply issues. Furthermore, their messages point to the importance of sustainable development for meeting the needs of current and future generations. I sincerely hope that this

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

Seen from the vast, jet-black emptiness of outer space, Earth is brilliant and blue—a miraculous planet capable of supporting life. Earth is humankind's shared home, and all of us on Earth today must endeavor to establish a new society based on harmony with our natural environment. In this way, we can leave for future generations a more prosperous, just, and safe world.

We believe wholeheartedly that, through the ingenuity and earnest efforts of humanity, the serious environmental problems that we now face will someday be solved. Through its work, the Asahi Glass Foundation hopes to contribute to finding these solutions.

October 1997

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jiro Furumoto". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jiro Furumoto

Chairman

The Asahi Glass Foundation



**The Earth is a precious ecosystem,
home to myriad living things.**



At the Asahi Glass Foundation, we hope that people everywhere will work toward protecting our planet from human destruction and ensuring that our magnificent environment continues to exist for tomorrow's generations.



* The symbol of the Blue Planet Prize, top left on this page, represents our responsibilities to our fragile home. It is a symbol of hope for our children, of coexistence and interrelation with our environment. This design depicts the dynamic connection and balance between all elements of our world: the pristine blue sky and sea, people, nature and the universe.



Inaugural Blue Planet Prize Winners Announced at UNCED



Media reception prior to the press conference on the announcement of the awards.



Professor Jiro Kondo, president of the Science Council of Japan and a director of the Asahi Glass Foundation, makes a speech at the media reception.

■ Announcement of Winners

The winners of the inaugural Blue Planet Prize were announced during UNCED, which took place in Rio de Janeiro from June 3 to June 14, 1992. On June 4, the Foundation held a media reception at the Meridien Hotel in Rio de Janeiro. On June 8, the winners were announced in the Briefing Room of the Rio Centro Convention Center, the same room in which the United Nations held its UNCED press conference. The Foundation also sponsored a display booth spotlighting its activities at Global Forum '92, an event organized by a number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and held during UNCED in Rio's Flamengo Park.



Announcement press conference briefing at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

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.



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

Some Background on the Blue Planet Prize

Humankind has only one home, the Earth, and we all bear a responsibility to leave it in an inhabitable condition for future generations. To encourage humankind's search for solutions to global environmental problems, the Foundation established the Blue Planet Prize, an annual international award presented to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the solution of global environmental problems. The year the prize was first awarded, 1992, was the year that the world turned its attention to environmental issues at the Earth Summit held 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 to solving such environmental problems as global warming, acid rain, ozone layer depletion, destruction of ecosystems such as tropical rain forests, 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 achievements of potential award winners must contribute to forming a basis for the harmonious coexistence of peoples, societies, 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 nominators in more than 70 countries around the world. Living citizens of all nations, irrespective of gender or religion, are eligible. The list of nominees is narrowed down by the selection committee with the help of overseas advisors. 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 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 journalists, environmental

specialists, and academics from related fields. For the past five years, the Foundation has published a full transcript of the lectures and subsequent question-and-answer sessions. Information about the laureates and their achievements is also available on-line at 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 asset capable of sustaining human life far into the future. The Earth is a precious ecosystem, home to myriad living things. At the Asahi Glass Foundation, we sincerely hope that people everywhere will work toward protecting our planet from a human-made demise, ensuring that the natural environment continues to exist for tomorrow's generations. We believe wholeheartedly that, through the ingenuity and earnest efforts of humanity, the serious environmental problems that we now face will someday be solved.

Blue Planet Prize Selection Process

