Blue
Planet
Prize

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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1999 BLUE PLANET PRIZE: ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARD WINNERS

Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich (U.S.A.)

For co-founding the new science of conservation biology and for sounding the alarm about the population explosion's implications for the environment.

Professor Qu Geping (P.R.C.)

For establishing the legal framework for environmental protection in China and for his conservation efforts throughout that vast country.

The Asahi Glass Foundation today announced the winners of its prestigious Blue Planet Prize. Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich of the United States and Professor Qu Geping of China were named the recipients of this international award for their contributions to the resolution of global environmental problems.

The Blue Planet Prize, first announced in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, is awarded annually to two outstanding individuals or organizations. The Asahi Glass Foundation is a non-profit foundation that supports research in leading-edge scientific and technological fields to help solve issues of concern to people worldwide.

Dr. Ehrlich, Bing Professor of Population Studies and Professor of Biological Sciences at Stanford University, was chosen for his past efforts in co-founding the new science of conservation biology and for sounding the alarm about the population explosion's implications for the environment. Dr. Ehrlich is best known for his first blockbuster book "Population Bomb," published in 1968, and for his high-profile leadership role in alerting to the world to the dangers of over-population, habitat destruction and nuclear war's long-term effects on ecosystems. He has many other publications to his credit, many co-authored with his wife, the noted ecologist Anne Ehrlich.

Professor Qu Geping, a leading educator at numerous Chinese universities, was singled out for establishing the legal framework for environmental protection in China and for his conservation efforts throughout that vast country. The professor has achieved notable success by proposing environmental solutions that leave room for healthy economic development. Professor Qu Geping has served the Chinese government in many capacities and may be credited with steering China toward environmentally responsible practices despite the rapid pace of economic growth in recent years.

In addition to public recognition, each Blue Planet Prize winner will receive a certificate of merit, a commemorative trophy, and a supplementary prize of ¥50 million. An awards ceremony will be held at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo on October 22, 1999, and the prize recipients will deliver commemorative lectures at the United Nations University in Tokyo on October 25, 1999.

(For further information of the winners, please see the attachment.)

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Attachment

Remarks from the Award Recipients upon Being Notified of Their Selection

Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich

"I am very greatly honored to have been selected to receive the Blue Planet Prize for 1999. It is also a pleasure to join the distinguished company of laureates, most of whom I know. My wife Anne and I have focused our efforts over the years on undertaking the broadest possible analyses of the factors that are generating an ever more serious assault on Earth's life support systems and threaten major disruption of the essential ecosystem services upon which human society utterly depends. The principal factors are overpopulation, needlessly wasteful consumption, the use of faulty technologies, and a lack of appropriate guiding institutions and socio-political-economic arrangements. Among the latter, racism, sexism, and gross economic inequity stand out as forces contributing to a dismal prognosis for our civilization. To meet the enormous challenges of the new millennium—to shape and build a sustainable society—natural scientists, social scientists, political and industrial leaders, all need to make common cause.

"In recognition of that imperative, we and our colleagues at Stanford's Center for Conservation Biology are having increasing success working with social scientists—economists, legal scholars, psychologists, historians, businessmen, and others—to forge an interdisciplinary attack on the human predicament. We are working on such diverse topics as how to value ecosystem services, how to use satellite imagery to judge the ability of disturbed lands to support biodiversity, and the lessons that can be drawn from human evolution to help solve modern environmental and social problems. The Blue Planet Prize will add impetus to all of our programs. I accept it not only for myself and Anne, but also for John Holdren, Gretchen Daily, the CCB, and all the others who have worked with us for so long trying to generate rational ways to keep Earth a suitable home for humanity."

Prof. Ou Geping

"I am very pleased for the 1999 International Blue Planet Prize. For a person like me, who has worked for environmental protection for thirty years, it is indeed a great honor. This honor belongs not only to myself, but also to my colleagues, who have worked shoulder to shoulder with me through all those past years, to the Chinese people, who have come from an ancient civilization and are hard-working, and to all of our international friends, who have, over the years, supported China's environmental protection.

"I am fully aware of the severe challenges China's environment is facing. However, just as a poet pointed out, "Where there is danger, there grows the power to save the situation." What is gratifying is that China's environmental problems have woken the Chinese people: Unprecedented activities for environmental protection are going on throughout the country. It is the right choice of China to protect eco-environment and follow sustainable development.

"Though thirty years are just a short while in history, they are long to a human life. I am pleased that I have devoted the best thirty years of my life to the greatest cause in the world. I would like to continue my effort for it.

"I am very grateful to the Asahi Glass Foundation and its Selection Committee for this great honor, which I regard as best encouragement for myself and warm hearted support for China's environmental protection."

Profiles of the 1999 Blue Planet Prize Recipients

Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich

In the past 40 years as a professor at Stanford University, Dr. Ehrlich has become a leading authority on population biology* as well as one of the United States' most influential and representative ecologists.

Dr. Ehrlich closely observed populations of butterflies, one of the recognized indicators of ecological decline, over a 35-year period and analyzed the relationship of environmental factors to boom and bust cycles in the populations. These studies led him to co-found the new field of conservation biology, an area of study vital to the conservation of biological organisms. He also co-authored the theory of co-evolution, which attempts to explain the mutual effects of multiple species on survival and breeding. This research led him to understand that since humankind is just one of many interdependent species that evolved in a process of co-evolution, maintenance of the current ecology, which sustains a great diversity of species, is essential to the continued survival of the human race. He has postulated the theory that "if the services provided by ecosystems are not allowed to continue, civilization cannot continue." In his 1981 book, "Extinction," he drew upon his profound knowledge and research results to raise the general public's awareness of the dangers of the disappearance of species, receiving high acclaim for this informative book.

He published his belief, based on his studies, that the current and ongoing explosion in the growth of human population was a major cause of the destruction of habitat in a book called "The Population Bomb" in 1968. Well in advance of the Club of Rome's pronouncement of the "Limits to Growth," he pointed out that "the world is suffering from the disease called overpopulation," that population control is the only way to save it and that there are limits to human resource consumption. More than 3 million copies of this book were sold around the world, catapulting Dr Ehrlich to fame. The book also influenced the decision at the General Assembly of the United Nations to declare 1974 as World Population Year and to hold the first intergovernmental conference on population in Bucharest.

Dr. Ehrlich has formulated the impact of human populations on the environment as the equation "I=PAT." He applied this formula in the analysis of the various factors that contribute to environmental destruction. "I," the human impact on the natural habitat, is a product of three factors. "P," population (the number of people), "A," affluence (average person's consumption of resources, which is also an index of affluence) and "T," technology (an index of the environmental disruptiveness of the technologies that provide the goods consumed). "The last factor can also be viewed as the environmental impact per quantity of consumption." He explains that we must reduce the impacts of these three elements to maintain a healthy environment. He has also pointed out that the appropriate measure of population is the environment's "human carrying capacity" (the number of people that the resources and environment of an area can sustain over the long term) and that it is important for human beings to control their own population growth. In recent years, he has advocated improving the position of women and educating children since the education and emancipation of women is one of the most important strategies for controlling population.

Dr. Ehrlich, whose perspective includes environmental protection because of his wide-ranging biological research, has also identified many social issues as contributors to environmental problems. Poverty, the threat of nuclear war, and racist behavior are factors in common with global warming, acid rain, ozone depletion and desertification. In his 1977 book "The Race Bomb," he asserts that there are no intellectual differences between the various races on a biological level, championing a

* Population biology is the study of the patterns and causes of diversity within and among populations and species.

position against racial discrimination. In 1983, he played an important role among 40 prominent scientists who raised attention to the environmental dangers of nuclear war, predicting the destructive impact that such a conflict would have on the ecosystem.

Dr. Ehrlich attributes the reason for the general public's low awareness of population, resource and environmental crises to be rooted in an inadequate understanding of the fundamental functioning and history of the earth. He has striven to educate us with his publications and public appearances. To date, he has published more than 800 essays and books on his research results and broader conclusions.

In addition to being a constant companion, ecologist Anne Ehrlich, his wife, has collaborated on many of his publications and research projects.

Dr. Ehrlich is currently Director of the Center for Conservation Biology, an institute at Stanford University he was instrumental in founding. Together with his wife Anne, who serves as the Policy Coordinator, he is active in advocating policies that promote the conservation of biodiversity, in disseminating information about the latest research findings to ecologists and in making the general public aware of various issues.

Believing that "environmental destruction is the result of human acts and can be resolved by human acts," Dr. Ehrlich continues to foster the development of environmental sciences and to press for long-term solutions to environmental problems. These efforts have had a major effect on environmental preservation worldwide.

Education and Academic and Professional Activities

1953	Bachelor of Arts (University of Pennsylvania)
1955	Master of Sciences (University of Kansas)
1957	Ph. D. (University of Kansas)
1957–1959	Research Associate, NIH Project—Genetics and Behavior of Parasitic Mites (Chicago Academy of Sciences and Department of Entomology, University of Kansas)
1959–1962	Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences, Stanford University
1962–1966	Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Stanford University
1966–	Professor of Biological Sciences, Stanford University
1966–1976	Director, Graduate Studies Biological Sciences, Stanford University
1977–	Bing Professor of Population Studies, Stanford University
1982	Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences
1984–	Director of Center for Conservation Biology, Stanford University
1985	Member, National Academy of Sciences
1989–1990	President, American Institute of Biological Sciences
1992	Member, European Academy of Sciences and Arts

Major Awards Received

1987	Gold Medal, WWF International
1989	UNEP Global 500 Roll of Honour
1990	Crafoord Prize, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences
1991	MacArthur Prize Fellowship
1995	UNEP Sasakawa Prize (with Anne)
1996	Heinz Prize for Environment (with Anne)
1998	Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement (with Anne)

Professor Qu Geping

The People's Republic of China encompasses a vast area with completely different weather patterns and topography as one moves from north to south and east to west. Thus, it has the potential for a large number of complex environmental problems. With the rapid economic growth experienced in the transition from a planned economy to a market economy, environmental problems were expected to be a major issue.

Professor Qu Geping has devoted his energies to formulating a legal system for environmental protection suited to Chinese circumstances and to creating policies that promote both environmental protection and economic development. Over the quarter-century since he started in this field as a member of the Chinese government delegation to the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, he has enthusiastically aided the cause of environmental protection in China.

Believing that stronger environmental controls were necessary to prevent pollution and to improve habitats, the Professor first concentrated on developing a system of environmental laws and drafting the framework for environmental policies. Then, he personally supervised the scientific surveys required to gather up-to-date data on the problems and their solutions to provide a solid basis for the regulations.

At his initiative, China adopted its first environmental protection policies in late 1970's, shifting from an emphasis on development to an emphasis on efficacy. The three principles of "prevention," "the polluter bears responsibility," and "stronger environmental regulation" became the primary environmental policies. These policies were launched with the intention of learning from the example of economically developed countries that damaged their environments while developing. To mitigate urban pollution, stress was placed on prevention. The aim of the policy was to have polluters implement pollution controls within a fixed time period. Those responsible for polluting were identified, products with heavy emissions were weeded out, levies were assessed for emissions and plants that produced large volumes of pollution were forced to close or move. According to a 1988 survey, 250,000 of the 400,000 manufacturing plants in urban areas had a severe impact on the environment. In 1996 alone, 60,000 plants were closed.

With the worsening of the environment that accompanied rapid modernization, his focus was not fixed solely on drafting and implementing laws. He also promoted the scientific and technological resolution of problems by establishing research institutions to monitor pollution, develop new technologies and teach environmentalism. As part of this, he set up pollution testing and monitoring equipment in 4,000 sites around the nation. This practical approach has been highly praised as a good example for other developing countries. Moreover, he has advocated increased construction of hydro-electricity and nuclear power generating facilities as well as the upgrading of older coal-burning boiler technologies since China is dependent on coal for more than two-thirds of its energy requirements and is the fourth largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world.

China's large population has been a major cause of adverse environmental impacts. He paid the special attention to the environmental impact and pressure of population growth. He published articles in this field at early 1980's, in which he provided policy initiatives of control the fast growth of population. He also frequently lectured on the family planning policy. Since 1980, the family planning policy of China has gotten the great achivements.

Professor Qu Geping has used methods to raise the general public's environmental awareness that are unique among socialist nations. He started in 1993 with national press campaigns named Environmental Campaigns to the New Century, in which journalists were requested to report the full

extent of domestic environmental problems. As a result, 6,000 journalists in the past five years have published more than 48,000 stories about environmental problems, which has had a huge effect on the citizenry. The journalists used various media such as TV, broadcast, newspaper to praise the units and individuals with good environmental performance and to criticize that with bad environmental record. With his support and promotion, the Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of the National People's Congress of China succeeded in getting average citizens to participate in the drafting of environmental policies by inviting them to provide comments to peoples' congresses in which land-use laws were being revised. His many essays, publications and university lectures have also helped to raise concern about environmental issues.

Thanks to the efforts of the Professor, China has succeeded in controlling environmental problems to some extent while recording double-digit economic growth. Despite these efforts, the country still faces many environmental issues. Air, water and noise pollution in urban areas and soil erosion, desertification and habitat destruction in other areas are part of a broad range of problems. Professor Qu Geping, however, asserts that "the environment will improve without fail if we apply these laws and policies effectively. Blue skies and clean water will once again be ours." This is the belief on which he continues to press forward with conservation activities.

Education and Academic and Professional Activities

1952	Bachelor of Arts (Shandong University)
1957–1961	Director, Baoding Film Factory
1962–1968	Division Chief, Ministry of Chemical Industry
1968–1974	Division Chief, State Planning Commission/Planning Group of the State Council
1972	Member of Chinese Delegation to United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
1975–1976	Chinese Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme
1976–1982	Deputy Director, Office of Environment Protection Leading Group of the State Council
1982–1993	Administrator, National Environment Protection Agency
1984–	Part-time Professor, Beijing University
1985–	Part-time Professor, Qinghua University
1989–	Part-time Professor, People's University of China
1990–1996	President, China Environment and Science Association
1992	Deputy Director of the Chinese Delegation to the Rio Earth Summit
1993–	Chairman, Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of National People's Congress of China, Member of the Standing Committee of NPC
1993–	President, Environmental Protection Industry Association
1993–	President, China Environmental Protection Foundation

Major Awards Received

1987	Gold Medal from UNEP
1988	First National Prize for Scientific and Technical Advancement
1992	UNEP Sasakawa Prize

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