

Preface

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. Since the dawn of history, humankind has used the natural environment to build civilization. There is no disputing that our ability to enjoy the amenities of life on this Earth today is largely a result of the 20th century's astonishing technological advances and economic development. This has come at the cost, however, of allowing the environment to be harmed by global warming, over-exploitation of forest resources and declining wildlife stocks. Our mission as humans is to pass on this beautiful and irreplaceable planet in a state of sustainable natural abundance to the generations that follow.

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.

The year 2001, the start of the century often billed as the “Age of the Environment,” marked the 10th awarding of the Blue Planet Prize. We are extremely delighted to have been able to recognize 20 individuals or organizations so far that have achieved significant results in the environmental arena. It is our pleasure now to commemorate this 10th anniversary by publishing the commemorative lectures and essays of the recipients awarded the prize in the sixth to 10th years in the form of this book, *A Better Future for the Planet Earth Volume II*. It is the sequel to the first volume published in 1997 that featured the commemorative lectures and essays of the recipients awarded the prize in the first five years.

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.

August 2002

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hiromichi Seya". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the word "Seya".

Hiromichi Seya

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 Blue Planet Prize symbol, top left, 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 (1992)



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.

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



Press conference at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

■ 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.

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 responsibility to leave it in a habitable condition for future generations. To encourage the search for global environmental solutions, 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 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, 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 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 120 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 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 ten years, the Foundation has published a full transcript of the lectures. Moreover, in 1997 the fifth anniversary of the prize was commemorated by publishing *A Better Future for the Planet Earth*, a compilation of the lectures and essays by the prize winners for those years.

Information about the laureates and their achievements is also available on-line at the Foundation's website (<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

