



WECF | Women in Europe for a Common Future

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GRASSROOTS WOMEN FROM AROUND THE WORLD RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS “WOMEN’S RIO+20 GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS” FROM EIGHT WOMEN MINISTERS IN 21 JUNE CEREMONY AND RECEPTION AT RIO CENTRO

Rio de Janeiro (22 June 2012) 11 grassroots women, along with the organizations they represent, were feted yesterday by women environmental ministers and special guests in an awards ceremony at Rio+20 – the United Nations high level meeting on environment and sustainable development taking place this week in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The awards ceremony was remarkable not only in the participation of eight female high-level ministers from Mexico, South Africa, Brazil, Nigeria, Denmark, Iceland and Switzerland, but also, and quite centrally, in the compelling success stories of each of the prize winner’s local projects.

The prize process was agreed to at the February 2012 annual meeting in Nairobi, Kenya of the **Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment** where all agreed that Rio+20 presented an ideal time to launch an awards program to acknowledge exemplary work for sustainable development of grassroots women at the local level. **Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)** is a supporting member of the network and was asked to take the lead in soliciting applications. 150 applications were received– and **WECF Executive Director Sascha Gabizon** said “It was very difficult to choose as all were excellent”. On June 21st in Rio, 6 first place and 5 each second and third place (16 total) award winners were announced with a majority of the winners having a representative present at the ceremony.

In welcoming the crowd of 250 men and women in attendance, **H.E. Ms. Sandra Herrera, Deputy Minister of Environmental Regulation and Promotion at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico** (and co-chair of co-organizer **The Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment**) said

“This is a good opportunity to not only recognize the work that these outstanding women have done in local communities but also the work that is done by thousands of millions of women in their local communities and in their families every day all around the world.” She continued “we need to understand the linkages between gender and sustainability and to ensure the participation of women in environment and sustainable development at the national, regional and local level.”

The other co-chair of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, **Deputy Minister for Water and Environmental Affairs of South Africa, H.E. Ms. Rejoice Mabudafhasi**, added her congratulations to the winners present and said:

“You don’t need a lot of resources, you don’t need a lot of money to make a change in the lives of women. These women who are receiving the awards have transcended all the challenges and still make a difference in sustainable development.” She continued,

“If they would start telling us the stories of what they are doing, we would all wonder how are they managing. They are not only protecting the environment but also helping to eliminate poverty.”

Also present was **Ms. Amina Mohammed, the Deputy Director of UNEP** who said:

““I would like to say how proud we are to be associated with this process. This awards ceremony has come at an extremely opportune time – as we reflect on 20 years since Rio and the achievements that have been made by women in environment and development [we see that] this is a welcome change from the norm - where millions of women’s efforts, their contributions and their achievements remain invisible and are not recognized in any way.” Mohammed went on to say that she hoped this would become an annual event and that she would work to convince UNEP to continue this “excellent work with women” by providing both “financial and human resources to this noble cause.”

The final speaker who offered welcoming remarks was **Dr. Christoph Beier, Vice-Chair of the Management Board of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH**

“We feel that Gender Equality is such an important part – in fact, a prerequisite for sustainable development – and that we are all here in a very good place today, we have to do much more for gender equality in order to achieve our goals for sustainable development.” He continued,

“We at GIZ – we are always looking for practical examples of what we can support – I am so happy about these projects – these are all excellent examples about how women have made a difference on the way to sustainable development all over the world.”

Following the opening remarks, awards were presented individually to each of the first place winners by women ministers including **H.E. Ms. Tereza Campello, Minister of Social Development and Combatting Hunger, Brazil; H.E. Ms. Hadiza Ibrahim Mailafia, Minister for Environment, Nigeria; H.E. Ms. Svandis Svavarsdottir, Minister for the Environment, Iceland; H.E. Ms. Lulu Xingwana, Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, South Africa; and H.E. Ms. Doris Leuthard, Minister for Environment, Traffic, Energy and Communication, Switzerland,** as well as by the Network’s co-chairs.

First place winners received a medal, a certificate, a gift and, most importantly, a check for \$1,000 (USD) in honor of their achievement. The five categories of competition were: **Food Sovereignty, Climate Adaptation, Decent Jobs and Health, Water and Sanitation and Sustainable Energy.**

Each of the first place winners offered their thanks with remarks of their own, but there is no question that the general feeling of the awards winners was best summed up by **the first prize winner for Water and Sanitation - Ms. Rehema Bavuma Namagenda, of the Kitosia Women Development Trust, Uganda, who said**

“I am very grateful for this award. And I just want to remind you that women are about change in their communities – just put them in charge - show them where the resources are – give them the opportunity and they will turn this world upside down!”

There were five second and third place winners who were also present and who were introduced and who were presented with a gift and a certificate for their achievements by the co-chairs of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment.

A full list of prizewinners is included below.

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**The Full List of Winners of the Women's Rio+20 Good Practice Awards
Announced: 21 June 2012
At the United Nations Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

First Place:

Food Sovereignty (shared prize)

Ms. Kaba Djakagbe, Director, Guinean Association for Women's Burden Alleviation
Guinea

Ms. Maria Diocelinda Iza Quinatoa, Organization of Indigenous and Peasant Women Planting Hope
Ecuador

Climate Adaptation

Ms. Ruth Serech Icu, The Association of Coordination for Women's Integral Development, (CODIMM) **La Asociación de Coordinación de Desarrollo Integral de Mujeres (CODIMM)**
Guatemala

Decent Jobs and Health

Ms. Claudette De Costa Ferreira, Recycling to Live Cooperative (Cooperativa Reciciando para Vivir),
Brazil

Water and Sanitation

Ms. Rehema Bavuma Namagenda, Kitosia Women Development Trust, Uganda

Sustainable Energy

Ms. Kalyani Raj, All India Women's Conference,
India

Second Place:

Food Sovereignty

Manyaane Emily Tjale
Land Access Movement of South Africa
South Africa

Climate Adaptation

Claudia Amegankpoe
ECO-ECOLO, Benin

Decent Jobs and Health

Nguyen Thi Phuong Nga
The Centre for Sustainable Rural Development – SRD
Trung tam Phat trien Nong thon Ben vung
Vietnam

Water and Sanitation

Ms. Ashu Saxena
Energy Environment and Development Society Bhopal
India

Sustainable Energy

Ms. Katherine Lucey
Solar Sister
Uganda

Third Place:

Food Sovereignty

T.K. Omana
Rural Agency for Social and Technological Advancement (RASTA),
India

Climate Adaptation

Nadejda Vakhitova
Women of Mountains Group (WMG)
Uzbekistan

Decent Jobs and Health

Mme. Katim Alaoui
Mohammed VI Foundation for Research and Preservation of the Argan Tree
(Fondation Mohammed VI Pour La Recherche et La Sauvegarde De L'Arganier)
Morocco

Water and Sanitation

Ms. Nabila Idris
Community Action
Bangladesh

Sustainable Energy

Margaret C. A. Owino
Kenya
Solar Cooker International East Africa

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