



Seven environmental heroes to be honoured by UN agency

23 March 2006 –Seven protectors of the Earth, ranging from Mikhail Gorbachev, the former President of the Soviet Union, to an Ethiopian activist for community rights, were today named the 2006 winners of the United Nations top environmental prize.

The Champions of the Earth awards, to be presented for the second consecutive year by the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), recognize prominent and inspirational environmental leaders from each region of the world who have made an impact at the policy level, UNEP said. They will be honoured in Singapore on 21 April.

“A renaissance in environmental politics and policy does not come in a vacuum,” Klaus Toepfer, UNEP’s Executive Director said. “It needs the long-term commitment and vision of men and women. It needs people who have been and continue to be Champions of the Earth.”

The 2006 Champions of the Earth are:

- **Tewolde Gebre Egziabher** of Ethiopia, who campaigns for community rights in Africa and against the patenting of life forms.
- **Tommy Koh of Singapore**, who chaired the Earth Summit and the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea.
- **Mikhail Gorbachev** of the Russian Federation, who is prominent in the field of international environmental politics.
- **Rosa Elena Simeon Negrin** of Cuba, a champion of small island developing states.
- The **Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)**, which promotes women’s economic, social and gender rights within sustainable development.
- **Mohamed El-Ashry** of Egypt, former head of the Global Environment Facility, which helps developing countries with sustainable development.
- **Massoumeh Ebtekar**, Iran’s first female vice-president and a champion of cleaner production in the petrochemical industry.

The 2006 awards are supported by the Singapore Government, Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings (APRIL), the Lien Foundation, Nanyang Technological University, CNN Fortune, Time, Eco 4 the World Foundation, the Singapore Environment Council, Channel News Asia and Today.

The awards event will be broadcast across the Asia Pacific region by CNN and featured in such leading publications as Time and Fortune magazines, UNEP said.