



PRESS RELEASE

Freiburg, 14/03/2015

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Environmental laureates urge governments to fight climate change with a CO₂ emission tax

More than 100 environmental award winners from around the world signed an appeal at the fourth international convention in Freiburg, in which they urge the governments to introduce a CO₂ emission tax and stop subsidy for fossil fuels.

Basel / Freiburg, 14/03/2015 – “Floods, storms, droughts, and wild weather fluctuations plague the world. Polar ice shields are melting and the sea is rising. Severe heat waves, freshwater exhaustion, local air pollution and the dramatic loss of biodiversity are reaching alarming levels” - this is how more than 100 award winners, who met at the 4th international environmental convention in Freiburg, summarized the world's climate situation.

“For us, climate change is a reality at all levels”, reported for example Alicia Kaudia – the Environment Minister of Kenya – in her presentation on the adaptation to climate change. “Africa is the continent most affected by climate change, at the same time it has the least technical and financial ability to adapt to the consequences. In Kenya, 18 million people live in extreme poverty.”

The laureates prompted the governments in an urgent call “to introduce a tax on CO₂ emissions and to phase out fossil-fuel subsidies to help put humankind on track to avert catastrophic climate change.”

“Emission taxes involve – compared to CO₂ trading – great advantages”, remark the laureates in their appeal. “They are easily administered, calculable, and offer less opportunities for fraud and loopholes. The revenues will partially be used to finance the international Green Climate Fund, to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to climate change and maintain healthy ecosystems.” (full appeal in the appendix)



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In order to facilitate the introduction of such a tax, it should start relatively low to begin with, with five dollars per ton of CO₂. Every year, the tax should be increased by one dollar. “This way, economies and businesses have sufficient time to adapt to higher costs considering the current low energy prices, and develop alternatives,” says Eicke R. Weber, Director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE in Freiburg and Chairman of the Board of the European Environment Foundation, moderator of the award winners at the final adoption of the appeal. “In 10, 15 or 20 years, fossil fuels will be so expensive that alternative energies will be ahead in all areas. This is exactly what we need in order to have a chance to achieve the required 2-degree target we all call for.”

The laureates see their appeal as a signal to the government representatives from around the world who will meet in Paris for the next climate summit COP 21 at the end of the year, to finally adopt an ambitious and stable climate deal there. “We hope that this call will contribute to the limitation of the atmosphere's pollution,” says Eicke R. Weber.

Organizer of the “International Convention of environmental Laureates” is the European Environment Foundation whose board of trustees is made up of 16 well-known personalities in the field of environmentalism **Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker**, **Monika Griefahn**, **Marcello Palazzi**, **Professor Antonio Luque** or **Giovanna Melandri**. The board is chaired by **Eicke R. Weber**, director of Europe's largest solar research institute, the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems in Freiburg.

At a glance:

4th International Convention of Environmental Laureates

Date: March 12 – 15, 2015
Location: Freiburg i.Br., Germany
Patron: Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Klaus Töpfer, former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Participants: Laureates of renowned international environmental awards and of the alternative Nobel Prize.



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About the European Environment Foundation

The foundation, established in 2011, wants to give new impetus to environmental and climate policies. The foundation has set itself the goal of promoting communication and professional exchange between society, politics, research and economy around the globe and across all disciplines. Founders and directors of the foundation are Dr. Bernd Dallmann and Dipl.-Ing. Rolf Hiller. The board of trustees is made up of 16 well-known personalities from the field of environmental and climate protection and is chaired by Prof. Dr. Eicke R. Weber, the director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems.