



Press Release

Stockholm, 24 September 2018

Australian Agronomist Tony Rinaudo Named 2018 Right Livelihood Award Laureate

The Australian agronomist Tony Rinaudo, known as the “forest maker”, has been announced a Laureate of the 2018 Right Livelihood Award, widely known as the ‘Alternative Nobel Prize’.

Tony is recognised by the jury *“for demonstrating on a large scale how drylands can be greened at minimal cost, improving the livelihoods of millions of people”*.

The announcement was made at the International Press Centre at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs by Ole von Uexkull, Executive Director of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation, and Amelie von Zweigbergk, board and jury member.

Upon receiving the news, Rinaudo commented: “Receiving the Right Livelihood Award is a great honour and I am humbled. Even though this simple, low cost and rapid method of reforestation has had a very significant impact on the lives of millions of people, globally it is little known to national governments, donors, or communities who need it the most. It is my hope that the spotlight now, through this prize, being shone on farmer-managed natural regeneration methods will result in exponential uptake and increase the spread of it globally.”

Having lived and worked in Africa for several decades, Rinaudo has discovered and put in practice a solution to the extreme deforestation and desertification of the Sahel region. With a simple set of management practices, farmers regenerate and protect existing local vegetation, which has helped to improve the livelihoods of millions.

Rinaudo has pioneered a technique that involves growing up trees from existing root systems, which are often still intact and which Rinaudo refers to as an “underground forest”. By choosing the right plants, and by pruning and protecting them in a certain way, they soon grow into trees. Rinaudo realised that if it was people who had reduced the forest to a barren landscape, it would require people to restore it. Changing attitudes has been key to Rinaudo's successful work.

Rinaudo's farmer-managed natural regeneration method has restored 50,000 km² of land with over 200 million trees in Niger alone. It has the potential to restore currently degraded drylands with an area the combined size of India. What Rinaudo has created is much more than an agricultural technique, he has inspired a farmer-led movement greening land in the Sahel region.



Ole von Uexkull commented: “Rinaudo presents a practical solution to counter desertification, famine and despair. If policymakers are ready to support the farmer-managed natural regeneration approach, degraded drylands with an area the combined size of India could be restored.”

The other two 2018 cash awards go to the following Laureates:

- Civil and human rights defenders [Abdullah al-Hamid, Mohammad Fahad al-Qahtani and Waleed Abu al-Khair](#) (Saudi Arabia), who share an Award.
- Farmer [Yacouba Sawadogo](#) (Burkina Faso)

The 2018 Honorary Award goes to anti-corruption champions [Thelma Aldana](#) (Guatemala) & [Iván Velásquez](#) (Colombia).

The three cash awards are worth SEK 1 Million (EUR 96,000) each and will be used to support the Laureates’ successful work. The prize money is not for personal use.

The Award Presentation will take place in Stockholm on 23 November, followed by public events and high-level meetings in Geneva, Zurich and Berlin.

Contact

For further information and to arrange interviews with the Laureates, please contact:

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Further details on the Laureates, alongside high-resolution photographs and videos, are available at: rightlivelihoodaward.org/2018

About the Right Livelihood Award Foundation

Established in 1980, the Right Livelihood Award Foundation honours and supports courageous people and organisations offering visionary and exemplary solutions to the root causes of global problems. The Swedish Foundation sees its role as being the megaphone and shield for the Laureates, and provides them with long-term [support](#). It seeks to help [protect](#) those Award recipients whose life and liberty are in danger. The Foundation has Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council.



THE
RIGHT
LIVELIHOOD
AWARD

The Right Livelihood Award is annually presented to four Laureates. Unlike most other international prizes, it has no categories. The Award recognises that, in striving to meet the human challenges of today's world, the most inspiring and remarkable work often defies any standard classification. In total there are now [174 Laureates from 70 countries](#).

About the selection process

Anyone can [propose candidates](#) to be considered for the Right Livelihood Award. After careful investigation by the Foundation's research team, reports on the current proposals are submitted to the Foundation's board and [international Jury](#). The Jury meets annually in September to select the recipients.

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