



Media release from Biovision Foundation

First Swiss winner of Right Livelihood Award

Stockholm / Zurich, 26 September 2013 – **Hans R. Herren, one of the world’s leading experts on sustainable agriculture, wins the Right Livelihood Award for his commitment to end hunger and poverty in our world. The president of Biovision Foundation is the first Swiss to be awarded this prize since its inception in 1980.**

The jury of the prize, also known as the alternative Nobel prize, said the decision to award Herren was based on “his expertise and pioneering work in promoting safe, secure and sustainable global food supply”.

The World Food Prize laureate of 1995 sees the award as an important endorsement of his vision: A world which can provide all nine billion people expected to live on our planet in 2050 with sufficient healthy food.

“And this has to happen without overstepping planetary boundaries. This is only possible, if we invest in smallholder structures with sustainable and efficient ecological cultivation methods and move away from the paradigm of industrial agriculture which overuses natural resources and destroys biodiversity”, Herren said.

Herren shares the prize with three other key figures active in securing the fundamentals of human life: Paul Walker from the US “for working tirelessly to rid the world of chemical weapons”. Raji Sourani from Palestine “for his unwavering dedication to the rule of law and human rights under exceptionally difficult circumstances” and Denis Mukwege from the Democratic Republic of Congo “for his courageous work healing women survivors of war-time sexual violence and speaking up about its root causes”.

Ole von Uexkull, Executive Director of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation said at the prize announcement: “The world should not have to live with problems that we know we can solve. These four men, whose vision, courage and commitment we honour today, show what the solutions look like.”

Herren started Biovision Foundation in Switzerland 15 years ago to support his projects in East Africa. The primary aim of Biovision is to disseminate knowledge to smallholders who had been largely neglected by scientific research during the “green revolution” and the development of industrial agriculture – despite the fact that even today the majority of all food produced worldwide comes from smallholders. The Farmer Communication Programme of Biovision Foundation reaches around four million farmers in East Africa through its various channels, helping them to help themselves with the information they receive.

In order to create the right political framework for a global change in the course of agriculture, Biovision Foundation and the Millennium Institute further support policy work at international level under Herren’s lead, to promote this approach among policy makers. At the Environmental Summit in Rio last year Herren succeeded in getting important parts of his demands for the benefit of smallholders and environmentally sound agriculture into the summit’s final declaration.

Herren studied entomology in Switzerland and the US and is one of the world’s leading scientists in ecological pest control. During the 1980s he succeeded in defeating a cassava pest rampant in all of Africa

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with a wasp from South America – a chemical-free method which incurred no costs to farmers. He thus restored good yields of a staple food of 200 Million people. It was this feat that earned him the World Food Prize.

Herren lived and researched in Africa for 26 years. From 1994 to 2005 he was managing director of the Institute for Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe) in Nairobi, Kenya, which to this day plays a central role in finding solutions to combat pests and diseases in developing countries.

In May 2005 he was appointed president of the Millennium Institute in Washington DC, which supports governments of developing countries in developing sustainable policies.

Currently, Biovision and the Millennium Institute support three African countries, Senegal, Kenya and Ethiopia, in a pilot project analysing their agricultural sector and food systems to explore ways to achieve a change in agricultural policies.

In addition, Herren is actively involved in the development of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the aim of including the change of course in global agriculture and food security for coming generations prominently.

Further information on www.biovision.ch and on <http://www.rightlivelihood.org/index.html>

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