

The 2011 Right Livelihood Awards

Speech by

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Hon. Speaker and Members of Parliament, dear Award Recipients, Excellencies, Friends,

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This year, the Right Livelihood Award Family mourns the loss of three outstanding women. Rachel Avnery from Israel, and Dekha Ibrahim Abdi and Wangari Maathai from Kenya. Losing them has deprived us not only of their inspiration and wisdom, but also of two features too often forgotten in our struggles for a better world: joy and passion. The joy and passion they radiated in their quest for peace and for a healthy environment defied all obstacles. It reminded us that, while our path may be dangerous and difficult, it is also a road, which brings its own rewards: the thrill and delight of working for a greater good even when the odds against us are many.

The passion and joy of Rachel Avnery, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi and Wangari Maathai are already sorely missed. Please join me in a minute of silence and gratitude for these three remarkable lives.

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We are the guardians of all future generations of life on earth, facing challenges unprecedented in human history. We may feel that we are doing our best to meet these challenges. But in a crisis, as Winston Churchill reminded us, “it is not enough to do your best. You have to do what is necessary.”

Our failure to do what is necessary threatens to make growing parts of our planet increasingly uninhabitable, handing our children and their children a world of radically diminished options. The evidence for this threat is now high school science, recognised by an unprecedented scientific consensus, accepted by governments and business, denied only by those who cannot bear to see their old worldview collapse.

No area of life will be untouched by our failure to do what is necessary. Climate chaos, biodiversity loss and other environmental crises will destroy much of what we have achieved and make everything we want to achieve – from ending hunger and misery to building a peaceful world – much harder, if not impossible.

The respected IUCN now sees climate chaos growing even faster than expected, with negative impacts “greater than the worst predictions”.

Our actions in the next few years – for even the Pentagon expects a global energy crisis by 2015 – will determine whether or not we will preserve a planet similar to that on which civilisation developed and to which life on earth is adapted. For nature cannot be outvoted, does not negotiate and provides no bailout packages.

Sir Nicholas Stern warns that a continued refusal to do what is necessary to limit climate chaos will bring a “serious risk of global war”. Studies by the US and UK defence establishments agree: “Once again warfare would define human life.” (Pentagon, 2004).

How will “rich” societies react when unstoppable millions of climate refugees arrive from failed states where they can no longer survive – just when our “wealth” bubbles evaporate because the real economy can no longer externalise environmental costs and climate chaos destroys productive capacities?

The Club of Rome Business-As-Usual scenario outlined almost 40 years ago has largely come to pass, with growing resource scarcities (“global peak everything”) now looming. GDP “growth” may continue but will increasingly become uneconomic growth (to use the term of our award recipient Prof. Herman Daly), spent on damage repair and prevention, with little left to improve and spread material living standards, for the same resources and labour cannot be used twice.

The unavoidable radical transformation of our systems of production and consumption will not be cheap, easy or quick. But the changes required are still possible and affordable, if we do not delay any longer. The new industrial revolution required can offer huge entrepreneurial opportunities and create many millions of jobs. We need no miraculous new inventions to get it started. We need only put the best available policies and

institutions in place in order to give the right incentives for societies, markets and technologies to move in the right direction.

History shows that, with policy leadership, transformative change can come very fast. “All of a sudden, change that everybody thought was impossible became matter-of-fact. In 1941 it was absurd to think that the US could build a thousand airplanes a month to fight World War II. By 1943 that was a real small number.” (Al Gore)

We are now all called on to become leaders. We must all acquire the basic skills and knowledge, which this requires, or we will have failed our children and all future generations who depend on us to change course before the planet we have borrowed from them has been irretrievably damaged!

In times of upheaval people from all walks of life often find themselves called by their fellow citizens to take responsibility for the governance and renaissance of their localities, regions and countries until new order has been built. This award is for those who are ready when that call comes.

The development of solar energy is the most important technological challenge of our age. Each day, the sun radiates 15,000 times more energy onto the surface of the earth than we humans need. This award highlighted the need for soft energy paths already in the 1980s through our recipients Amory and Hunter Lovins, whose work continues to be at the forefront of resource efficiency and redesigning energy systems. In 1999, with Hermann Scheer, we awarded the main driver behind Germany’s exemplary feed-in tariff legislation to speed up renewable energy production. A few years later we honoured Martin Green from Australia, one of the leading scientists developing solar cell efficiency. And today, we are here to celebrate the vision and work of a pioneering businessman working to transform his country.

Huang Ming is a global solar entrepreneur showing how business can help overcome the energy and climate crisis. His aim is to speed up the transition from fossil and nuclear energy to renewables in China and abroad.

Many share this aim but few have been as successful in pursuing it as Huang Ming. With his company Himin, he has become a world leader in solar thermal energy. He has developed some of the most advanced solar technologies, ensuring their outreach and mass application. He is setting an example to the world with his Dezhou Solar Valley, one of the world's largest solar city development projects, which attracts up to 4000 visitors a day, including developers, city planners, and educators.

Besides his technological leadership and business record in promoting solar energy, Huang Ming was a key player in getting China's renewable energy law adopted in 2005. China is now the biggest emitter of CO2 in the world, but also has the biggest installed capacity of renewable energy – to which Huang Ming has contributed significantly. China, he says, can do so much more, and it needs to do so much more. His work shows how China can drive the solution to the unprecedented global challenge and threat of climate chaos – how the rising dragon can become a solar dragon!

The jury applauds Huang Ming *“for his outstanding success in the development and mass-deployment of cutting-edge technologies for harnessing solar energy, thereby showing how dynamic emerging economies can contribute to resolving the global crisis of anthropogenic climate change”*.

It is with very great pleasure that I present the 2011 Right Livelihood Honorary Award to Huang Ming.

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The tyranny of Hissène Habré's dictatorship in Chad is one of many sinister examples of the 20th century where the victims are still waiting for the perpetrator to be held accountable. Jacqueline Moudeina is their voice for justice. Among the first women to register as lawyers in her country and one of the few who found the courage to take on the cases of Habré's victims, she has survived a murder attempt and stood up against defamation and silence to win justice for thousands of Chadians who were tortured, imprisoned and killed by a brutal regime. An untiring human rights advocate, she has pleaded and worked with both African and European courts and decision-makers to have Habré arrested and extradited from his refuge in Senegal so that he finally faces trial.

Even though Senegal still refuses to prosecute or extradite him, it is thanks to Jacqueline Moudeina that his atrocities are not forgotten, and that there is hope for the victims that justice will prevail.

Jacqueline Moudeina has been an African pioneer in the complex field of international criminal law. But she is not only working at the highest judicial level: much of her groundbreaking work is done at the grassroots together with her colleagues at the Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights.

Their programmes include:

- Creating a national monitoring system on prison conditions, and training prisoners and prison wardens
- Ending the slavery of children who are sold in markets to work as agricultural labourers
- Educating about legal means to prevent child marriages; and
- Seeking compensation for environmental damage from the Chad Cameroon Oil and Pipeline Project.

The jury recognizes Jacqueline Moudeina *“for her tireless efforts at great personal risk to win justice for the victims of the former dictatorship in Chad and to increase awareness and observance of human rights in Africa”*.

It is with very great pleasure that I present the 2011 Right Livelihood Award to Jacqueline Moudeina.

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In recent years we have been alerted to the devastating impact of food price speculation and the buying up of large areas of farmed land by foreign investors. Small farmers have lost their livelihoods, seed diversity has been destroyed, soaring food prices have sparked riots and worsened famines. Many of the facts and figures underlying such reports are based on evidence collected, analysed and provided by GRAIN, a small non-profit organisation. For two decades, GRAIN has been a key player in the global movement to

challenge corporate power over people's food and livelihoods, and to promote food sovereignty.

GRAIN monitors and analyses trends that affect farmers' and rural communities' control over their livelihoods. They publish data, which is used by the media, civil society movements and institutions like the World Bank, and foster public debate on topics such as intellectual property rights, genetic engineering and biodiversity.

Grain not only documents this global farmland grab, which is characterised by a lack of transparency and little or no democratic control. It also helps mobilise resistance against it. Movement-building, networking and capacity sharing are integral to their work, which is why GRAIN's staff and partners have repeatedly crossed path and built alliances with many of our former Laureates: MST in Brazil, Pat Mooney in Canada, Vandana Shiva in India and Tewolde Gebre Egziabher in Ethiopia.

The jury honours GRAIN *“for their worldwide work to protect the livelihoods and rights of farming communities and to expose the massive purchases of farmland in developing countries by foreign financial interests”*.

It is with very great pleasure that I present the 2011 Right Livelihood Award to GRAIN, represented tonight by Henk Hobbelink and Renée Vellvé.

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This Prize has been presented to couples before. But never with a time gap of 31 years. In 1980, Stephen Gaskin received one of the first ever Right Livelihood Awards. Today, we are here to pay tribute to his wife, Ina May Gaskin, and to acknowledge every woman's right to choose freely and fearlessly how our children are born.

Ina May Gaskin has revived and modernised the ancient practice of midwifery, which places the mother at the centre and does not see pregnancy and childbirth as a medical condition.

Over the last century, prompted by the profits medicated births and caesarean sections provide for powerful players in the health industry, the medical establishment in the

U.S.A. began to advise more and more frequently against natural births, with other countries following suit. To counter this development, Ina May Gaskin founded The Farm Midwifery Center in 1971. While the U.S.A. as a whole has seen an extreme rise in caesarean section rates up to over 30 % in the new millennium, Ina May Gaskin and her colleagues – many of whom she trained herself – reported a 2 % rate even though they delivered many multiple births and breech babies.

Ina May Gaskin is a teacher and awareness-raiser, a best-selling author and activist. She has taught and lectured around the globe. Currently, some of her main activities are:

- The Safe Motherhood Quilt Project, which aims to lower the rising maternal death rate in her home country by creating a system for reporting, classifying, and counting the maternal deaths in the U.S. and reviewing and analysing their causes.
- An information campaign about the risks to the lives of mother and child when using drugs to induce labour.

The jury honours Ina May Gaskin *“for her whole-life’s work teaching and advocating safe, woman-centred childbirth methods that best promote the physical and mental health of mother and child”*.

It is with very great pleasure that I present the 2011 Right Livelihood Award to Ina May Gaskin.

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In conclusion, I hope that what you take home with you tonight is some of the joy and passion I talked about earlier. The joy in seeing that solutions to our challenges do exist, the joy in knowing that what you do is not only right but also bears fruit – personal and for us all, - and the passion to continue!

Tonight we celebrate human rights, biodiversity, entrepreneurship, and health, a secure future for our children and justice as guiding principles in our livelihoods. Not just as a vision for the future, but manifested in the work and dedication of this year’s Award Recipients – and, of course, in that of our former Laureates. I already mentioned Stephen Gaskin, our first Laureate ever, who is – thanks to his wonderful wife – with us tonight, but I am also very pleased that Alyn Ware, who received the Prize in 2009, could join us

for this celebration. Alyn's work with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament brought him to Stockholm, and it is always a great pleasure to see Laureates of different Award generations meet and interact to support and strengthen each other.

There are many who make this Award thrive and grow, and I would like to thank all of them for their contribution: the Swedish Parliament and the Association for the Right Livelihood Award in the Parliament, my colleagues on the board, jury and council of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation, our nominators and partner organisations, the artists and all the staff who make this evening possible, and especially our Partners, Circle of Friends and other donors without whom this Award could not exist.

Let me conclude with words of Wangari Maathai:

“Despite all the constraints you may face, all the lack of the good things that many of us look for, dedicating oneself to the common good of society, to the environment, to democratic principles and to peace is itself a great reward. Sometimes it is not recognised, sometimes not pleasant, but there is a personal satisfaction, a feeling that you have lived your life to the full, that you have been a productive, a useful, a valuable member of the greater community of the living. It is your future. Take it, work for it, and devote your life to it, so that you, too, may pass a better world to your children.”

Thank you very much!