

VOA Special English Environment Report

THE 2000 GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE WINNERS

This is Bill White with the VOA Special English Environment Report.

Seven environmental activists from all over the world have received this year's Goldman Environmental Prize. The winners were awarded 125,000 dollars each by the Goldman Environmental Foundation. The awards were announced last week at the yearly ceremony in San Francisco, California. The Goldman Environmental Prize is the world's largest program that honors local environmental activists. Environmental heroes representing every continent in the world receive the prize each year. Judges choose one winner from each continent. However, this year's prize for South and Central America is shared by Oscar Rivas and Elias Diaz Pena of Paraguay. They formed a non-governmental organization. The organization works for development that does not harm the environment, better farming systems and improved living conditions for poor people in Paraguay.

Rodolfo Montiel Flores of Mexico won the Goldman Prize for North America. Mr. Montiel united farmers and environmentalists to stop forest destruction in Mexico. Mr. Montiel has been in prison for almost a year. He is accused of having ties to a guerrilla movement.

Alexander Peal of Liberia is the Goldman Prize winner from Africa. Mr. Peal worked to create Liberia's first and only national park. He also started the country's first non-governmental environmental organization. Now is he

working to improve the national park and surrounding villages.

Oral Ataniyazova of Uzbekistan won the award for Asia. Dr. Ataniyazova started a center for reproductive health and the environment. She has worked to improve the lives of local people, especially women and children.

Lawyer Vera Mischenko of Russia won the prize for Europe. Ms. Mischenko helped organize the first Russian public interest law organization. She also brought the first successful legal actions against the Russian government in defense of the environmental and health rights of citizens.

Nat Quansah of Madagascar won the award for the island nations. He is a scientist who is helping to save the forests of Madagascar. Mr. Quansah developed a health care and environmental protection program on the island nation. He also is re-introducing the medical value of native plants.

This VOA Special English Environment Report was written by Cynthia Kirk. This is Bill White.

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