



European Commissioner for Environment Janez Potočnik is to receive the United Nations' 2013 [Champions of the Earth](#) award.

The prize – which is the UN system's highest environmental accolade - is awarded to leaders from government, civil society and the private sector whose actions have had a significant and positive impact on the environment.

Mr. Potočnik, 55, will receive the Policy Leadership award for his commitment to an inclusive Green Economy and boosting resource efficiency including in respect to food wastage across the European Union.

The Slovenian national's leadership has emphasized how rising pressures on water, land, and other resources can trigger a positive shift towards more sustainable, low-carbon economies and lifestyles.

Mr. Potočník who took office in 2010, has called for EU member states to pursue policies and incentives to promote sustainable consumption and production, most notably in the agricultural sector.

Under his leadership, the European Union has set targets to halve food waste and practically eliminate landfill by 2020. His role in tackling resource inefficiencies across the food chain has made a substantial contribution to the ongoing UNEP and Food and Agricultural Organization's campaign Think.Eat.Save: Reduce Your Foodprint.

"It is an honour to receive this award and I wish to express to UNEP my deep appreciation for its work on sustainable development. Unless we change the way we produce and consume we will face a crisis in our natural resources. It is crucial that we make the necessary changes now rather than when we hit environmental tipping points," said Mr. Potočník,

UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, said, "Despite the challenges posed by the financial crisis and the economic downturn Mr. Potočník played a key role in maintaining Europe's focus on the future as an advocate for a more sustainable and resource efficient economy. Science, innovation and persistence have been leitmotifs of his tenure as Commissioner for the Environment."

"Leadership and vision will be the hallmarks of a transition to an inclusive Green Economy in developed and developing countries alike. That transition is underway and has been given fresh impetus by the outcomes of last year's Rio+20 Summit. This year's Champions of the Earth are among those who are putting in place the actions, policies and pathways to scale-up and accelerate such transformations. As such they are lighting rods towards a sustainable 21st Century," he added.

Other winners of the 2013 Champions of the Earth award, which is organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), include: Google Earth; Carlo Petrini, the founder of the Slow Food Movement; Izabella Teixeira, Minister of Environment, Brazil; Veerabhadran Ramanathan, Professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UCSD; Jack Dangermond, founder of the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), and Martha Isabel Ruiz Corzo from the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve in Mexico. The Guangdong Wealth-sponsored awards are to be presented at a ceremony in the American Museum of Natural History in New

York on September 18, attended by a host of celebrity activists including supermodel and UNEP Goodwill Ambassador Gisele Bündchen.

The individuals and organizations received awards in the categories of Policy Leadership, Entrepreneurial Vision, Science and Innovation and Inspiration and Action.

Additional links:

About Champions of the Earth

Champions of the Earth, which was launched in 2005, is the UN's flagship environmental award. To date, it has recognized 59 individuals and organizations for their leadership, vision, inspiration and action on the environment. The list of previous Champions laureates include Mongolian President Tsakhia Elbegdorj, Mexican President Felipe Calderon, Chinese actress and environmental advocate Zhou Xun, the Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) and global music legend Angélique Kidjo. Visit <http://www.unep.org/champions/> for more details.

About Guangdong Wealth

Guangdong Wealth Environmental Protection is a leading supplier of water purifying products and water treatment integrated solutions in China. The company practices a business model that puts social welfare before economic interests. Their development concept "let the sky be bluer and the water clearer" supports UNEP's goals of maintaining, if not improving, the health of our natural resources. The company invests in environmental scholarships for young university students, organizes clean-up operations and donates tonnes of purifying tablets to tackle pollution in rivers in Guangdong and Beijing.