



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SPEECH

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INFORMATION
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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE
GREEN LEAF AWARDS**

***PALAIS DES NATIONS, ALGIERS, ALGERIA
MONDAY 5 JUNE 2006***

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Algeria, Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika,
Minister Chérif Rahmani,
Distinguished and honoured guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to the Green Leaf Awards, being presented to the best works of art from the UNEP and Natural World Museum “Art for the Environment” exhibition.

Art for the Environment is not just an art movement; it is a social movement. Creative expression is how we humans have turned our concepts and beliefs into action.

Thirty thousand years ago, rock art, such as we can see in the Tassili N'Ajjer in the south of Algeria, evolved out of humankind's relation to the natural world. Today, the Natural World Museum uses environmentally inspired art to generate positive outcomes in the preservation of our natural heritage.

Through the Art for the Environment initiative, the Natural World

Museum has joined forces with UNEP to provide a unique context for exploring environmental preservation through art and education.

We hope that, in the process of sharing artists' deep sensitivity to the plight of the planet, in works of art ranging from ancient and indigenous objects to contemporary forms and multi-media visions, we can promote a deeper understanding and connection to our natural world.

Artists play a critical role in generating dialogue about particular environmental issues. The Green Leaf Artist Awards celebrate artistic excellence in inspiring and engaging the public in environmental awareness and action.

You may well ask why we chose the name 'Green Leaf' for the awards. Allow me to explain the symbolism.

In the East, the leaf is a symbol of happiness and prosperity. In the West, a bouquet or a wreath of laurels, such as on UNEP's logo, designates an ensemble of people, or a community, that is united in action and thought.

This is the mission of Art for the Environment and the Green Leaf Artist Awards.

Creative excellence is being honoured here tonight in the following categories:

- Sculpture
- Painting
- Photography
- Conceptual installations, and
- Multimedia

And the winners are....

[presentation of awards]

Ladies and gentlemen,

That concludes the Green Leaf Artist Awards presentation.

I hope you enjoy, and are inspired by, these Art for Environment exhibits, which we feel are a truly stimulating way of helping us all to look afresh at the world we live in.

Thank you.