An open letter from Goldman Environmental Prize winners to government leaders regarding the 2012 Earth Summit

We are the recipients of the Goldman Environmental Prize. We have been threatened. We have been tortured. We have been jailed. We have died from industrial toxins in our blood. We have been killed.

We are the recipients for the Goldman Environmental Prize. We are from 81 countries. We are grassroots activists. We are national ambassadors. We are indigenous people. We are environment ministers. We are women. We are men. We are elders. We are youth.

For over two decades the Goldman Environmental Prize has honored individuals for the great risks we take to protect the environment. Now we ask you to take a risk. Attend the Earth Summit in Rio and lead us into action.

The Earth Summit is a profound opportunity to move us forward in our global commitment to protect the planet, a commitment that was recognized 20 years ago at the historic Earth Summit of 1992. Since then the people of the planet have brought back endangered species, conserved fragile territories, and developed alternatives to some of our most destructive practices. Again and again communities have won great battles.

But let’s face it, environmental leadership has come from civil society, people like us who put our lives on the line to protect the environment. Now, urgently, we request that governments take the lead in protecting the planet we all share. For future generations, we urge you to attend the Earth Summit and make real commitments toward sustainable development. We urge you to take a risk, as we have done, to defend Earth.

Sincerely,

Jane Akre
United States, 2001

Kaisha Atakhanova
Kazakhstan, 2005

Giorgos Catsadorakis
Greece, 2001

Rudolf Amenga-Etego
Ghana, 2004

Oral Ataniyazova
Uzbekistan, 2000

Pisit Charnsnoh
Thailand, 2002

Ikal Angelei
Kenya, 2012

Rashida Bee
India, 2004

Choi Yul
South Korea, 1995

Randall Arauz
Costa Rica, 2010

Robert Brown
Australia, 1990

Matthew Coon Come
Canada, 1994

Prigi Arisandi
Indonesia, 2011

Caroline Cannon
United States, 2012

Willie Corduff
Ireland, 2007
Julio Cusurichi Palacios  Peru, 2007
Janet Gibson  Belize, 1990
Eha Kern  Sweden, 1991

Dai Qing  China, 1993
Anna Giordano  Italy, 1998
Manana Kochladze  Georgia, 2004

Demetrio do Amaral de Carvalho  East Timor, 2004
Małgorzata Górska  Poland, 2010
Michal Kravcik  Slovakia, 1999

Tuenjai Deetes  Thailand, 1994
Maria Gunnoe  United States, 2009
Jean La Rose  Guyana, 2002

Elias Diaz Peña  Paraguay, 2000
Syeda Rizwana Hasan  Bangladesh, 2009
Jesús León Santos  Mexico, 2008

Feliciano dos Santos  Mozambique, 2008
Lynn Henning  United States, 2010
Dmitry Lisitsyn  Russia, 2011

Raoul du Toit  Zimbabwe, 2011
Von Hernandez  Philippines, 2003
Luis Macas  Ecuador, 1994

Wadja Egnankou  Ivory Coast, 1992
Noah Idechong  Palau, 1995
Thuli Makama  Swaziland, 2010

Corneille Ewango  Democratic Republic of Congo, 2005
Laila Iskandar  Egypt, 1994
Myrsini Malakou  Greece, 2001

Pablo Fajardo Mendoza  Ecuador, 2008
Yuyun Ismawati  Indonesia, 2009
Atherton Martin  Dominica, 1998

Tarcísio Feitosa da Silva  Brazil, 2006
Hugo Jabini  Suriname, 2009
Bernard Martin  Canada, 1999

Maria Elena Foronda Farro  Peru, 2003
Margaret Jacobsohn  Namibia, 1993
Alexis Massol-González  Puerto Rico, 2002

Sarah James  United States, 2002
M.C. Mehta  India, 1996

Edwin Gariguez  Philippines, 2012
Christine Jean  France, 1992
Olya Melen  Ukraine, 2006

Sofía Gatica  Argentina, 2012
Chavannes Jean-Baptiste  Haiti, 2005
Vera Mischenko  Russia, 2000

Lois Gibbs  United States, 1990
Hilton Kelley  United States, 2011
Emma Must  England, 1995
Ricardo Navarro  
El Salvador, 1995

Carlos Alberto Ricardo  
Brazil, 1992

John Sinclair  
Australia, 1993

Harrison Ngau Laing  
Malaysia, 1990

Marina Rikhvanova  
Russia, 2008

Ursula Sladek  
Germany, 2011

Alexander Nikitin  
Russia, 1997

Humberto Ríos Labrada  
Cuba, 2010

Olga Speranskaya  
Russia, 2009

Evaristo Nuguagu  
Peru, 1991

Oscar Rivas  
Paraguay, 2000

José Andrés Tamayo Cortez  
Honduras, 2005

Odigha Odigha  
Nigeria, 2003

Stephanie Roth  
Romania, 2005

Bruno Van Peteghem  
New Caledonia, 2001

Oscar Olivera  
Bolivia, 2001

Eugène Rutagarama  
Rwanda, 2001

Jorge Varela Márquez  
Honduras, 1999

Marc Ona Essangui  
Gabon, 2009

Ignace Schops  
Belgium, 2008

János Vargha  
Hungary, 1990

Juan Pablo Orrego  
Chile, 1997

Heffa Schuecking  
Germany, 1994

Orri Vigfússon  
Iceland, 2007

Garth Owen-Smith  
Namibia, 1993

Tuy Sereivathana  
Cambodia, 2010

Ka Hsaw Wa  
Burma, 1999

Medha Patkar  
India, 1992

Champa Devi Shukla  
India, 2004

Cath Wallace  
New Zealand, 1991

Alexander Peal  
Liberia, 2000

Silas Siakor  
Liberia, 2006

Craig Williams  
United States, 2006

Francisco Pineda  
El Salvador, 2011

Marina Silva  
Brazil, 1996

Steve Wilson  
United States, 2001

Nat Quansah  
Madagascar, 2000

Andrew Simmons  
St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1994

Luis Yanza  
Ecuador, 2008

Sophia Rabliauskas  
Canada, 2007

Hammerskjoeld Simwinga  
Zambia, 2007

Yu Xiaogang  
China, 2006

Rosa Hilda Ramos  
Puerto Rico, 2008

Sviatoslav Zabelin  
Russia, 1993