

ANNOUNCED THE 2024 WINNER OF THE WANGARI MAATHAI FOREST CHAMPIONS AWARD

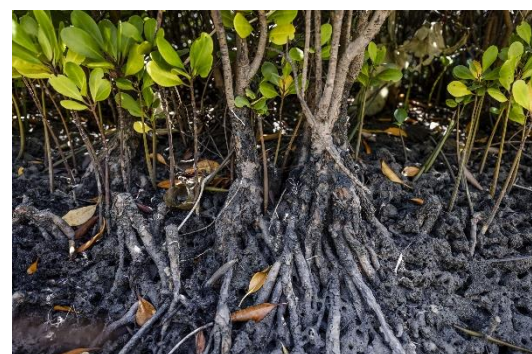


Filipino community leader [Nida Collado won the 2024 Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award](#) for her outstanding achievements and steadfast commitment to forest conservation and restoration and improving livelihoods.

The award was presented by the [Collaborative Partnership on Forests](#) (CPF), which is chaired by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), at a [ceremony](#) during the [27th Session of the Committee on Forestry](#) (COFO) in Rome. At the ceremony the FAO Director-General QU Dongyu stressed that Collado's passion and innovative thinking have created lasting and positive change in forest management and restoration of mangroves – she is an inspiration for all of us.

The community in San Vicente, Palawan, in the western Philippines, faces challenges such as poor reforestation seedling survival rates, poaching, illegal wildlife trading, and destructive farming practices. It is also recovering from the devastation of Typhoon Rai in December 2021. As the President of the Macatumbalen Community-Based Forest and Coastal Management Association (MBFCMA) since 2002, Nida Collado has led the association and community members in restoring and protecting their environment through innovative techniques and strong community involvement. This includes reforesting 1,450 hectares of denuded land and protecting 400 hectares of remaining forests and the community's water source. By 2009, she had successfully mobilized projects from both government and non-government organizations, further encouraging community participation. She educates farmers on the harms of slash-and-burn farming and organizes six women's groups, two youth associations, and one men's association to promote collective responsibility in forest and [mangrove protection](#).

Nida innovatively championed a technique to restore denuded mangroves. Reforested mangrove pockets, which are picked by individual villages, create interconnected pockets managed by village communities. This innovation forms a fisher-friendly pathway through the mangrove forest, blending traditional wisdom with modern conservation practices. Her dedication not only restored large tracts of forest but also empowered her community to sustainably manage and benefit from their natural resources, highlighting the far-reaching impact of community-led environmental management.



“From the few believers we had when we started, to being heard at the national level, and now standing here on the global stage, this journey has been incredibly meaningful for me and those who believed in and supported me. Winning the Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award proves that our efforts are worth cultivating and expanding,” Nida said. “When we see our forests’ rich ecosystem, the mangroves are thriving, when we still smell fresh air, enjoy swimming in clean waters, and water sources are not scarce, those are priceless rewards.”

Established by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in 2012, the Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award recognizes outstanding individuals for their pioneering efforts in promoting community forest management involving indigenous communities and all forest users.

The CPF launched the first Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award in 2012 to honour and commemorate the impact of the late Kenyan environmentalist, who championed forest issues across the globe. Maathai was the first African woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace in 2004. Her Green Belt Movement is an environmental organization that empowers communities, and particularly women, to conserve the environment and improve livelihoods. The movement has also planted over 51 million trees in Kenya. This spirit is revived through the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, which was launched with a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of people and nature.

Previous winners of the Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award are Nepalese community forestry movement leader Narayan Kaji Shrestha (2012), Mexican environmental campaigner Martha Isabel ‘Pati’ Ruiz Corzo (2014), Ugandan forestry activist Gertrude Kabusimbi Kenyangi (2015), Brazilian forestry activist Maria Margarida Ribeiro da Silva (2017), Burundian forestry activist Léonidas Nzigiympa (2019) and Cameroon forestry activist Cécile Ndjebet (2022).

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests CPF comprises 16 international organizations working together to promote sustainable management of all types of forests and strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.

To know more

[FAO Pres Release](#)

[The Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award](#)

[FAO's forestry work](#)

[27th Session of the Committee on Forestry](#)

[9th World Forest Week](#)

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