

THE CHAMPIONS OF THE EARTH UNEP AWARD ANNOUNCED THE FIVE WINNERS OF THE 2025 EDITION

March 2026

On 10 December 2025, the [UN Environment Programme UNEP announced the 2025 Champions of the Earth](#), honouring five extraordinary leaders who are tackling some of the most urgent challenges of our time: climate justice, methane emissions, sustainable cooling, resilient buildings, and forest conservation.

Every year since 2005, UNEP honours individuals and organizations working on innovative and sustainable solutions to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste. Champions transform our economies, innovate, lead political change, fight environmental injustice and defend our natural resources.

The work of this year's laureates focuses on the crisis of climate change: [global temperatures are on track to exceed 1.5°C within the next decade](#), and current pledges fall short of [Paris Agreement Goals](#). Adaptation costs for developing countries could reach [\\$310–\\$365 billion](#) annually by 2035, twelve times current funding levels. Yet, these Champions prove that action is possible and powerful. Cutting methane today can cool the planet within years, improve air quality, and create jobs. Restoring forests safeguards water, reduces disasters, and protects biodiversity. Sustainable cooling and resilient buildings save lives, preserve food and vaccines, and keep economies productive. Climate justice ensures that vulnerable communities have a voice and legal protection.

[The following five UNEP Champions of the Earth 2025](#) have been selected from all the nominations received from around the world:

- [Mariam Issoufou, Principal and Founder, Mariam Issoufou Architects, Niger/France.](#)
By grounding her architecture in local materials and cultural heritage, Ms. Issoufou is redefining sustainable, climate-resilient buildings across the Sahel and inspiring a new generation of designers shaping Africa's built environment. She pioneers passive cooling techniques that keep buildings up to 10°C cooler without air conditioning. [More Information.](#)
- [Imazon, Brazil.](#)
A research institute combining science and AI-driven geospatial tools to curb deforestation, Imazon's work has strengthened forest governance, supported thousands of legal cases, and revealed the scale of illegal deforestation—driving systemic change in the Amazon. [More Information.](#)
- [Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu.](#)
A pioneer in sustainable cooling and ecosystem restoration, Ms. Sahu's initiatives have created 2.5 million green jobs, expanded forest cover, and integrated heat adaptation into infrastructure, benefiting 12 million people and setting a model for climate resilience. [More Information.](#)



- [Manfredi Caltagirone \(posthumous\)](#).
Former head of UNEP's International Methane Emissions Observatory, Mr. Caltagirone championed transparency and science-based action on methane, influencing the EU's first regulation on methane emissions and shaping global energy policy. [More Information](#).
- [Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change](#).
A youth-led NGO that secured a landmark opinion from the International Court of Justice affirming states' legal obligations to prevent climate harm and protect human rights, their campaign is reshaping global climate law and empowering vulnerable nations. [More Information](#).

In its 20th year, UNEP's Champions of the Earth award is the UN's highest environmental honour, celebrating environmental leaders who deliver important solutions in their fields. This year's laureates, announced on the margins of the seventh session of the UN Environment Assembly, are tackling some of the most urgent challenges of our time: climate justice, methane emissions, sustainable cooling, resilient buildings, and forest conservation.

Since the award's inception in 2005, the Champions of the Earth awards has recognized 127 laureates, ranging from world leaders to technology inventors. On the website, all winners of the annual awards are presented with articles that allow readers to learn about their innovative initiatives. UNEP has opened the nomination period for the 2026 Champions of the Earth award, which this year focuses on leaders who invest in the care of the ocean, an essential ecosystem for life on Earth that is increasingly under pressure.

To know more

- [2025 Champions of the Earth Award](#)
- [News in UNEP website 2025 Champions of the Earth Award](#)
- [About the Award](#)
- [Laureates by Year | Champions of the Earth \(unep.org\)](#)
- [Champions of the Earth News and Stories \(unep.org\)](#)
- [All News and Stories | Champions of the Earth \(unep.org\)](#)

