



CONFERENCE

Thirty-sixth Session

Rome, 18 - 23 November 2009

PRESENTATION OF THE A. H. BOERMA AWARD 2008-2009

1. The Eighteenth Session of the FAO Conference in November 1975 adopted Resolution 1/75 as a “vote of thanks” to former Director-General Addeke H. Boerma, and decided to institute a new permanent activity in FAO as a continuing tribute to Dr. Boerma for his services to the Organization, in various capacities, for nearly three decades. The Conference requested the Council to choose and initiate such an activity.
2. At its Seventy-first Session in June 1977, the Council welcomed the proposal of the Director-General that an A.H. Boerma Award be presented biennially to a journalist, or other persons, whose writing on development questions had helped to focus public attention at the international or regional levels on important aspects of the world food problem, particularly related to agricultural and rural development in developing countries, with the likely result of having increased public support of measures leading to its solution. The Council recommended that a prize of US\$10 000 be awarded to one person, or shared between several winners. It further recommended that the Award need not necessarily be confined to the written word, but within constraints of a practical nature, could be extended to productions in all the information media, including particularly television and radio.
3. The Nineteenth Session of the Conference in 1977 adopted the following paragraph in its Report:

“The Conference noted the decision of the Council at its Seventy-first Session that the A.H. Boerma Award should consist of one biennial US\$10 000 prize for one or more writers whose work was likely to have increased international public awareness of the world food problem and of measures leading to its solution. The recipient or recipients would be selected by the Director-General, bearing in mind the relevant recommendations made by the Council, and the presentation would take place during the Conference sessions”.

4. The Award consists of:
 - (i) A scroll describing the recipient's achievements
 - (ii) An engraved FAO medal
 - (iii) A cash prize of US\$ 10 000
 - (iv) An expenses-paid visit to Rome to receive the Award for the Award winner and spouse.

Selection of Award winners

5. The Award winners are selected by the Director-General in consultation with the Independent Chairperson of the Council and the Chairpersons of the Programme and Finance Committees, after earlier review of all nominations carried out by the Communication Division, and of selected entries by the A.H. Boerma Award Review Committee.
6. Regional Representatives are encouraged to make use of their Regional Information Officers in the search for and evaluation of potential nominees. FAO Representatives in member countries are asked to keep watch for potential entries of sufficient merit and, where appropriate, may obtain suggestions from the United Nations Information Centres in their respective countries of assignment. The Assistant Director-General Exchange and Communication Department, acting through the Chair of the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) may, as appropriate, seek suggestions from other organizations of the United Nations system.
7. The materials upon which nominations are based must have been published or publicly presented during the four-year period ending on 31 March of the Conference year in which the Award is presented.
8. The deadline for submission of nominations to FAO Headquarters is 30 April of the Conference year in which the Award is presented.
9. The Award for the 2008-2009 biennium will be presented at the Thirty-sixth Session of the FAO Conference, at a ceremony to be held on Wednesday, 18 November 2009.
10. This year the Award is being granted jointly to Ms Laetitia Clavreul, journalist for France's leading newspaper, *Le Monde* in acknowledgement of her substantial contribution to informing the public about issues related to food and agricultural production, and to Mr Shykh Seraj, leading agricultural and environmental affairs journalist and Bangladesh television presenter for his groundbreaking covering of farming issues in both the print and broadcast media.
11. Laetitia Clavreul has been writing for the French newspaper *Le Monde* in the field of economic affairs. She has made it a point of honour to bring readers' attention to the importance of agriculture and its impact both on the French economy and on the economies of developed and developing countries. Ms Clavreul's writing has gone a long way towards raising awareness about issues related to food production, agricultural and rural development. In writing about economic and political issues affecting developing countries, she has frequently underlined the role played by small rural producers and artisans. Her work not only identifies principal trends in food production and world agriculture but considers developments in the light of an increasingly complex economic and financial background. Among these issues are those connected with agricultural trade and international trade negotiations and the role of emerging economies and the importance of agricultural development for these countries in particular.
12. With almost thirty years of experience in the media, Mr Seraj has worked as a text journalist (most notably for the widely-read papers *Daily Jugantor* and *Daily Ittefaq*) and broadcast journalist and presenter on many TV programmes, exploring the problems faced by farmers and rural communities. Mr Seraj has effectively used his position in the media to become a mediator between different sectors of society. His programmes 'give voice' to farmers by bringing their problems to the attention of policy-makers and government. He is also a trusted promoter of new technologies and farming approaches which increase productivity and food

security in farming communities. The programmes show Mr Seraj interacting with the farmers, who clearly feel great respect and affection for him. He has also introduced a live broadcast to enable farmers 'to join his programmes from remote areas and put forward real time problems and share the solutions'. He is currently working to modernize agriculture and tackle the digital divide by setting up the 'E-agriculture' initiative to disseminate agricultural information and reviews.

13. In a wider sense, the dedicated work of both of the A.H. Boerma Award winners has contributed greatly to substantially enhancing public awareness and understanding of important aspects of the world food problem, of agricultural and rural development issues either through the print or broadcast media.