

10 Journalists and Media Organisations Recognised for Stellar Reporting on diverse Environmental Issues

Inaugural Forum focuses on the media's role in advancing the Paris Climate Agreement

SINGAPORE, 12 October 2016 – A record of 234 entries was received for this year's Asian Environmental Journalism Awards (AEJA), representing a 34% surge from the previous year. Five years into its run, AEJA - which recognises and rewards outstanding environmental journalists who put Asia's environmental issues at the forefront through quality reporting, arresting images and compelling facts - has noticeably gained traction across 20 countries, including first-time participant, Azerbaijan.

New this year is the inaugural environmental forum featuring a plenary discussion addressing the role of the media in ensuring the global community fulfils its responsibilities outlined at COP21 in December last year. Many countries including Singapore have ratified the Paris Climate Agreement and the forum puts into context and gather critical insights into the media's role in not just reporting but pushing for action on major environmental issues. Moderated by Ms Jessica Cheam, Editor and Founder of Eco-Business, the panel features senior leaders from academia, business, government, media and civic society.

At the ceremony, 11 awards across five categories were given out to eight outstanding journalists and two media organisations. Ms Wang Yan from China retains the SEC-CDL Environmental Journalist of the Year title she won in 2015 with her thought-evoking articles that centre on social, environmental and human rights issues pervading in her country. Channel NewsAsia took home the SEC-Lee Foundation Environmental Media Organisation of the Year award which they attained previously in 2014.

Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed, Singapore's former Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and currently the Foreign Minister's Special Envoy to the Middle East, is the Chairman of the AEJA Judging Committee, a role he has held since the inaugural edition of the AEJA in 2012.

"Each year, the judges are impressed by the quality submissions and face the very difficult task of selecting winners for the different categories. This year is no different. The work of environmental journalists will be essential and continue to grow in advancing our world forward in environmental awareness and responsibility," said Mr Zainul.

Explaining the purpose behind the introduction of the forum, Ms Isabella Loh, Chairman of SEC said, "We want the AEJA to be the platform to both recognise environmental journalists and organisations for their brave, impartial and outstanding work, and discuss environmental issues and solutions. The forum will enable guests, panellists and journalists to learn and share best practices, and highlight Asia's leadership role in the fight for environmental sustainability. The Paris Climate Agreement represents a historic step forward and a golden opportunity for everyone on this planet to make mitigating climate change and protecting the environment a top priority."

Ms Esther An, Chief Sustainability Officer for City Developments Limited (CDL), a long-time supporter of AEJA said, "Given the unprecedented level of global commitment to combat climate change, countries, communities, businesses and individuals must do their part. Journalists play a significant role in advocating and calling for action, as their stories help to interpret complex environmental issues and raise eco-consciousness. Since the Awards started in 2012, we have seen greater interest and depth in environmental reporting. Wang Yan has indeed raised the bar by clinching the winner title for the SEC-CDL Environmental Journalist of the Year for two straight years. We hope that her works and other environmental journalists will continue to inspire people in the region and across the world to do more for the environment."

Over 30 journalists will attend an exclusive workshop on environmental journalism led by Mr Adam Hunt, Media & Communications Director of Internews, who has a wealth of experience in conducting media training on environmental issues, and plays a significant role in international development projects. Issues surrounding opportunities and challenges in environmental and sustainable development reporting will be on the agenda, as well as tips on getting the best out of digital media platforms.

Mr Chee Hong Tat, Minister of State for Communications and Information and Ministry of Health, officiated the awards ceremony as the Guest-of-Honour and presented the awards at Orchard Hotel.

Please refer to:

Annex A for the list of award winners

Annex B for the profile of the panellists

Annex C for the biography of the winners

**** END OF MEDIA RELEASE****



ABOUT THE ASIAN ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM AWARDS

The Asian Environmental Journalism Awards (AEJA) was introduced in 2012 to recognise and reward excellence in environmental journalism at all levels of society. From passionate citizen journalists, to outstanding professional journalists, to the environmental attitudes of overall media organisations, the AEJA highlight exceptional journalistic work, and encourage continued high-quality coverage of environmental issues in Asia. The awards are open to Asian journalists, as well as journalists working in and writing about Asian countries.

2016 also saw the launch of the inaugural forum, which offers a new platform for thought-provoking dialogue on broad journalism trends and challenges that reporters face in the region when reporting on environment and sustainable development issues.

For more information about the Asian Environmental Journalism Awards, please visit www.sec.org.sg/aeja.



ABOUT THE SINGAPORE ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

Established in 1995, the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) is an independently managed, non-profit and non-government organisation (NGO). We influence thinking on sustainability issues and coordinate environmental efforts in Singapore.

We are also an approved charity and offer tax exemption to donors. SEC continuously engages all sectors of the community by formulating and executing a range of holistic programmes, such as the Singapore Environmental Achievement Awards, Asian Environmental Journalism Awards, School Green Awards, Singapore Green Labelling Scheme, Project: Eco-Office, Project: Eco-Shop and Project: F&B. In addition, we build a pool of committed volunteers under our Earth Helpers programme. Our Training and Education arm provides the people, public and private sectors with the opportunity to develop awareness, knowledge, skills and tools in order to protect and improve our environment for a sustainable future.

Strong partnerships with corporations, government agencies and other NGOs are valued by us. These partnerships are vital for sustaining our programmes, leading to positive action and change. Over the years, SEC has given strength and direction to the environmental movement in Singapore.

 [@SECSingapore](https://twitter.com/SECSingapore)

 [SingaporeEnvironmentCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/SingaporeEnvironmentCouncil)

 [SECSingapore](https://www.youtube.com/SECSingapore)

For more information about the Asian Environmental Journalism Awards, please contact:

Ms Shirley Chua
Director (Communications)
Singapore Environment Council
Tel: (65) 6433 5396
Mobile: (65) 9737 4977
shirley.chua@sec.org.sg

Ms Serene Choo
Executive (Communications)
Singapore Environment Council
Tel: (65) 6433 5376
Mobile: (65) 8220 4408
serene.choo@sec.org.sg

Asian Environmental Journalism Awards (AEJA) 2016 Winners

Category	Winners
SEC-CDL Environmental Journalist of the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Wang Yan from China (Winner) ❖ Jane Qiu from China (Merit Winner)
SEC Environmental Story of the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Marc Lajoie from Hong Kong (Winner) ❖ Vaidehi Shah from Australia and Wang Yan from China (Joint Merit Winners)
SEC Young Environmental Journalist of the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Liyana Othman from Singapore and Sohara Mehroze Sochi from Bangladesh (Joint Winners)
SEC-Lee Foundation Environmental Media Organisation of the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Channel NewsAsia, MediaCorp Pte Ltd (Winner) ❖ Thomson Reuters Foundation (Merit Winner)
SEC Environmental Photograph of the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mushaful Imam from Indonesia (Winner) ❖ Chaideer Mahyuddin from Indonesia (Merit Winner)

Profile of the Panellists

Panellist	Profile
	<p>Adam Hunt <i>Media & Communications Director, Internews</i></p> <p>Working with Internews' Earth Journalism Network, Adam is Media and Communications Director overseeing Mekong Partnership for the Environment's media development and communications programs, including the Mekong Matters Journalism Network. He is Editor and media partnership coordinator of EJN's GeoJournalism website The Mekong Eye. Adam has worked in Canada, Thailand, Singapore, Brazil, and Japan as a project leader, communications specialist, grantmaker, journalist and trainer.</p> <p>He has held various leadership positions on international development projects, including Grants and Training Director for Internews Thailand-Burma, and Project Development & Evaluation Specialist for the APEC Secretariat. He also led a community development project in his native Canada as Program Director for Pathways to Education. Adam holds a Master's degree in Planning (International and Community Development) and B.A. degrees in Journalism and Sociology/Commerce.</p>
	<p>Professor Ang Peng Hwa <i>Professor, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information</i></p> <p>Professor Ang Peng Hwa is Professor at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and one of the vice-presidents of the Consumers Association of Singapore, where he serves as a legal advisor to the Advertising Standards Authority of Singapore.</p> <p>In 2007, he co-founded the Haze Elimination Action Team with the goals of educating farmers on sustainable agricultural practices as well as boycotting the companies who do not adopt such practices. More recently, the Team is organising a representative action to sue the companies responsible for the Haze.</p> <p>A lawyer by training, he worked as a journalist and so he combines his teaching and research interests in law and communication, touching on internet law and policy, censorship, and the social impact of media.</p>



Belinda Ford

Region Public Affairs and Communications Director, Coca-Cola

Belinda Ford is Public Affairs and Communications Director for Coca-Cola Malaysia and Singapore. Prior to her current role, Belinda was Head of Public Affairs for Coca-Cola Myanmar and before that worked for the company in Australia.

Belinda has been with The Coca-Cola Company for 10 years having worked across various roles in Public Affairs and Communications including Sustainability, Government Relations and Corporate Affairs.

Belinda holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Melbourne and a Master of Business Administration from the Australia Graduate School of Management, University of New South Wales.



Yuen Sai Kuan

Director, Corporate Affairs, National Climate Change Secretariat

Yuen Sai Kuan is Director, Corporate Affairs at the National Climate Change Secretariat (NCCS), Strategy Group in the Prime Minister's Office. He oversees corporate planning and administration in NCCS, as well as the Secretariat's outreach and engagement initiatives with the People, Private and Public (3P) sectors on climate change.

Mr Yuen graduated from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with an Honours degree in Chemistry and Computational Science. He also holds a Master of Science degree in Environmental Engineering from NUS and a Master of Science degree in Public Administration and Public Policy from the London School of Economics, UK. Mr Yuen was one of the recipients of the inaugural batch of Public Utilities Board (PUB) undergraduate scholarships in 1991.

He joined PUB in 1996 and worked on initiatives such as the NEWater demonstration project and restructuring of the Singapore energy market. He was seconded to the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources from June 2004 to June 2011 where he held appointments in water policy, industry development and corporate development.



Prerna Suri

Broadcast Journalist

Prerna Suri is an award-winning journalist, documentary filmmaker, writer and commentator, having spent over a decade in international affairs and news organizations. She is currently working with Singapore’s biggest news channel, Channel NewsAsia, on current affairs documentaries, with her latest film investigating the European refugee crisis.

In 2015, Prerna was consulting for the United Nations Foundation on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ran several workshops across South and South East Asia for policymakers, journalists and NGO’s on their relevance. In her spare time, Prerna advises select firms and foundations on communications strategies and runs mentoring workshops for emerging journalists and development workers.

Prior to Medicorp, Prerna was the Regional Information Officer for the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the flagship UN agency for emergency relief and disaster management, producing and managing their communications network in the Asia Pacific, engaging with humanitarian partners, NGO’s, media houses and internal partners.

Previously, Prerna has worked with some of the biggest names in international journalism, including- Al Jazeera English, Reuters, BBC and CCTV. Her reports have taken her to the frontiers of Sudan, China, Egypt, India, Sri Lanka, the Gulf and Nepal.

Prerna holds a Master of science degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). She is an avid walker, yoga enthusiast and enjoys traveling.

Biography of the Winners

Awardee	Profile
<p>Wang Yan</p> <p><i>Winner of SEC-CDL Environmental Journalist of the Year, and Joint Merit Winner of SEC Environmental Story of the Year</i></p>	<p>Wang Yan started to cover and report on environment issues in China since 2008. During the past nine years, she has finished stories on various topics including pollution, ecological protection, biodiversity and species losses, climate change and etc. During the past few years, Wang Yan has also been funded by a few fellowship programs to report on environment issues.</p>
<p>Jane Qiu</p> <p><i>Merit Winner of SEC-CDL Environmental Journalist of the Year</i></p>	<p>A Chinese freelancer in Beijing, Jane Qiu has written extensively about environmental issues of the Tibetan Plateau and surrounding mountain ranges, covering a wide range of topics and geographic locations — from the meltdown of Tibetan glaciers (drawing from her experience on the Guliya Ice Cap at 6,700 metres above sea level) to pollution at the bottom of the Mariana Trench (which she is yet to go). She regularly contributes to <i>Nature</i>, <i>Science</i>, <i>Scientific American</i>, <i>The Economist</i>, and SciDev.Net.</p>
<p>Marc Lajoie</p> <p><i>Winner of SEC Environmental Story of the Year</i></p>	<p>Marc Lajoie is a Canadian award-winning reporter and producer for China Daily Asia Pacific, and formerly the Wall Street Journal. Specializing in long-form mixed-media projects, Marc believes that new media gives us an opportunity to tell better stories. Before going into journalism, he worked in medical research and studied theoretical physics.</p>
<p>Vaidehi Shah</p> <p><i>Joint Merit Winner of SEC Environmental Story of the Year</i></p>	<p>Vaidehi has worked in Singapore’s sustainability sector since 2008, and has led projects including policy research on climate change, a position paper on plastic bag use, and community outreach programmes. She joined Eco-Business in 2014, and has covered issues like climate change, sustainable business, and cleantech for a global audience.</p>
<p>Liyana Othman</p> <p><i>Joint Winner of SEC Young Environmental Journalist of the Year</i></p>	<p>Liyana Othman is an environment journalist with Mediacorp, with a passion for saving the environment through small gestures such as not using plastic bags, buying eco-friendly products, and writing stories that shed light on environmental issues. She hopes that these acts will inspire others around her to protect the planet too.</p>
<p>Sohara Mehroze Sochi</p> <p><i>Joint Winner of SEC Young Environmental Journalist of the Year</i></p>	<p>A graduate of Yale University, Sohara won Climate Tracker’s COP 22 youth fellowship last year. Currently she leads the South Asia Hub of Climate Tracker, sings with Ghaashphoring choir and is the Vice Curator of Dhaka Hub, Global Shapers Community. Sohara recently won the EJM CCMP fellowship for COP 22.</p>

<p>Channel NewsAsia</p> <p><i>SEC-Lee Foundation Environmental Media Organisation of the Year</i></p>	<p>Channel NewsAsia Singapore was established in 1999 by Mediacorp and is an English-language Asian TV news channel. Positioned to “Understand Asia”, it reports on global developments with Asian perspectives. Channel NewsAsia (International) was launched in 2000 and is now viewed in 28 territories across Asia, with its satellite footprint stretching across the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia and Australia.</p> <p>Channel NewsAsia has a dedicated team of reporters reporting on environmental issues and underlying social fabrics of our society. Every year in conjunction with World Environment Day, Channel NewsAsia – as part of Mediacorp’s green initiative Saving Gaia – ramps up its environmental reporting and presents a dedicated slate of green-related content in the month of June. This year marks the ninth year since Mediacorp introduced the Saving Gaia initiative in 2008.</p>
<p>Thomson Reuters Foundation</p> <p><i>Merit Winner of SEC-Lee Foundation Environmental Media Organisation of the Year</i></p>	<p>With a team of almost 40 journalists and 100 freelance writers, the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charity arm of Thomson Reuters, covers the world’s under-reported stories. Our reporting on climate change and environmental issues takes readers to the front lines of the issue, to understand the impacts – and to look at potential solutions.</p>
<p>Mushaful Imam</p> <p><i>Winner of SEC Environmental Photograph of the Year</i></p>	<p>Being a photojournalist has always been a passion for Mushaful Imam, who works in SINDO newspapers, managed by Media Nusantara Citra. Throughout his 18 years as a photojournalist, Mushaful Imam has won several awards. He now works and lives in Palembang City, South Sumatra.</p>
<p>Chaideer Mahyuddin</p> <p><i>Merit Winner of SEC Environmental Photograph of the Year</i></p>	<p>Born in Aceh and a tsunami survivor – Chaideer is a photojournalist based in Aceh working for Agence France-Presse (AFP) Jakarta Bureau. He is interested in environment issues, conservations, human interest, fund raising for social causes and education, wildlife, landscape, cultures, and enjoys traveling to remote villages and forests around in Indonesia. Chaideer is also an avid mountain biker.</p> <p>Since 2007, Chaideer is also an advisor to the Aceh Nature Community (ANC); a community made up of students, nature lovers, environment activists, photographers, videographers, researchers and writers. ANC works for issues concerning wildlife, biodiversity, and runs a nature habitat program in Aceh.</p>