

PRESS RELEASE

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Rolex Announces Winners of International Awards For Enterprise

Five Prizes of US\$100,000 and Five of \$50,000 Awarded for Ten Groundbreaking Projects Worldwide

DUBAI, 17 November 2008 – Rolex today announced the ten winners of the 2008 Rolex Awards for Enterprise, which for more than 30 years have supported pioneering work in science and medicine, technology and innovation, exploration and discovery, the environment and cultural heritage. The award recipients hail from around the globe – from India, Jordan, Mexico, Paraguay, South Africa, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the United States – and join a global network of 110 visionaries from 38 countries who have received vital project support and recognition from the Swiss watchmaker since the Awards were founded in 1976.

The Rolex Awards fund new and ongoing projects that demonstrate a spirit of enterprise and address pressing needs around the world, from climate change, to wildlife and habitat preservation, to cultural preservation, to providing water, food, medical supplies and education for impoverished communities. Rolex will present US\$100,000 each to five Laureates, who will be honoured tomorrow evening (18 November) in a ceremony in Dubai – the first ever Rolex Awards ceremony held in the Middle East. Five Associate Laureates will each receive \$50,000 at ceremonies in their home countries. All ten winners will also receive a Rolex chronometer.

“The Rolex Awards for Enterprise enable the work of global pioneers who are breaking new ground in their fields, and improving lives worldwide,” said Patrick Heiniger, Chief Executive Officer of Rolex. “We are proud to support these truly original thinkers, and salute them for their ingenuity and commitment of purpose.”

The 2008 Rolex Laureates – chosen from nearly 1,500 applicants in 127 countries by an independent panel of scientists, educators, economists and other experts – are:

- **Talal Akasheh (Jordan)**, 61, who, after devoting 26 years to documenting the ancient monuments of Petra, is creating an information system that will inform future conservation efforts at this beloved, yet threatened, historic site.
- **Tim Bauer (U.S.)**, 31, who is using breakthrough technology to retrofit polluting two-stroke vehicle engines that are common in the Philippines, helping to alleviate a major environmental and public-health risk in South-East Asia.

- **Andrew McGonigle (U.K.)**, 35, a physicist who is developing a new means to safely and reliably predict volcanic eruptions using an unmanned aircraft.
- **Andrew Muir (South Africa)**, 43, a conservationist providing Aids orphans with life skills, training, and jobs in South Africa's burgeoning ecotourism sector.
- **Elsa Zaldívar (Paraguay)**, 48, who is bringing an eco-friendly solution to her country's housing shortage by creating composite building materials made of plant and plastic waste to construct affordable housing.

The 2008 Rolex Associate Laureates are: **Alexis Belonio (Philippines)**, 48, creator of a new technology that transforms the waste from rice production into clean, affordable cooking fuel; **Arturo González (Mexico)**, 44, an explorer and researcher excavating archaeological remains in submerged caves or *cenotes* on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula; **Rodrigo Medellín (Mexico)**, 50, who is working to save Mexico's indigenous bats through habitat protection and education; **Moji Riba (India)**, 36, a film-maker helping to preserve and document the rich cultural heritage of India's Arunachal Pradesh tribes; and **Romulus Whitaker (India)**, 65, a lifelong conservationist who is establishing a network of rainforest research stations to document and protect the biodiversity of southern India.

Selection Process

The 2008 Rolex Award winners were chosen by an independent, voluntary jury of international experts, chaired by Patrick Heiniger. This year's Selection Committee members are: **Dr Vikram Akula**, founder and CEO of SKS Microfinance, based in India and the United States; **Etienne Bourgois**, head of a French clothing company and expedition leader; **Professor Denise Bradley**, president of the Australian College of Educators; **Dr Geh Min**, ophthalmologist, environmentalist and president of the Nature Society of Singapore; **Professor Farkhonda Hassan**, Egyptian geologist and professor at the American University in Cairo; **Dr Rodrigo Jordán**, educator and explorer from Chile; **Yolanda Kakabadse**, Ecuadorian environmentalist and champion of sustainable development; **Dr Phil Nuytten**, Canadian pioneer of the commercial diving industry; **Dr Ivo Pitanguy**, plastic surgeon and director of the Ivo Pitanguy Clinic and Institute in Brazil; **Dr Anatoly M. Sagalevitch**, Russian oceanologist and head of the Shirshov Institute of Oceanology's Laboratory of Manned Submersibles; **Professor Emil Salim**, professor of economics at the University of Indonesia; and **Dr Kathryn D. Sullivan**, director of the Battelle Center for Math and Science Education Policy at Ohio State University and former NASA astronaut.

Rolex Philanthropy

Since its founding a century ago, Rolex has established a tradition supporting individual excellence and achievement around the globe. Through its two primary philanthropic programmes, the Awards for Enterprise and the Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, Rolex fosters innovation in science, exploration, conservation, and the arts worldwide.

For more information on the Rolex Awards for Enterprise, visit: rolexawards.com.

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THE 2008 ROLEX LAUREATES

Talal Akasheh (Jordan)

The 2,500-year old city of Petra, one of the world's most important archaeological sites, is threatened by natural decay and the impact of increased tourism in the region. With the Rolex Award, chemistry professor Talal Akasheh will complete a vital information system that will inform the city's future conservation efforts. His geo-archaeological information system (GIS) will map the site and track minute details of Petra, monitoring its physical characteristics, the condition of the monuments and the impact of surrounding development.

Tim Bauer (U.S.)

Mechanical engineer Tim Bauer and his team have created a low-cost retrofit kit to cut emissions from the ubiquitous two-stroke engines used by 1.8 million tricycle drivers in the Philippines. The kit reduces particulate emissions by 70 per cent while improving fuel efficiency, saving \$1,000 a year for those who depend on the vehicles for their livelihoods. Atmospheric pollution causes an estimated 15,000 deaths in the Philippines annually. With the Rolex Award, Bauer will retrofit 5,000 vehicles in the Philippines as a first step towards replicating the project across Asia.

Andrew McGonigle (U.K.)

Millions of people around the world live near a volcano. With the Rolex Award, Scottish physicist Andrew McGonigle will develop a new technology, AEROVOLC II – an unmanned, small-scale helicopter that measures the volcanic gases CO₂ and SO₂ – in Etna and Stromboli in Italy. McGonigle's invention holds the promise of reliably predicting volcanic eruptions weeks, even months, in advance. The aircraft operates at a drastically reduced cost compared with previous efforts, while eliminating the often deadly task of physically measuring volcanic gases.

Andrew Muir (South Africa)

A longtime champion of the extraordinary natural resources of his native country, Andrew Muir has pioneered a programme to address the devastating impact of HIV/Aids in South Africa. With the Rolex Award, Muir will expand his Umzi Wethu Training Academy for Displaced Youth, a multifaceted intervention programme that provides Aids orphans and individuals living in child-headed households with training and jobs in ecotourism in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Muir will also raise visibility for the project so it can be replicated throughout Southern Africa, home to 80 per cent of the world's orphans.

Elsa Zaldívar (Paraguay)

Paraguay is suffering from a severe housing shortage, with two out of five people living in poverty. The Rolex Award will enable Elsa Zaldívar to produce low-cost particle board from recycled vegetable fibre, strengthened with melted plastic waste, which will be used to build houses, thereby helping to save Paraguay's forests. The Award will also fund construction of three demonstration homes to encourage the use of this material.