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# CSE gets Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace

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NEW DELHI: Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the New Delhi (India)-based independent research and advocacy think tank, has been awarded the prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for the year 2018. The award was presented here today by former Vice President of India, Mohammad Hamid Ansari.

According to the international jury which decided on the recipient of the 2018 prize, CSE has been awarded for “its pioneering work over almost four decades in environmental education and protection, for its steadfast advocacy of measures to combat environmental deterioration, for its success in influencing public policies and programmes that have benefitted social and economic development in India, and for keeping the issue of environmental sustainability at the forefront of national attention and public policy.”

Past recipients of this award include illustrious personalities and institutions like Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Communist Party of the (then) Soviet Union (1987); Gro Harlem Brundtland, prime minister of Norway (1988); the UNICEF (1989); Vaclav Havel, president of the Czech Republic (1993); Jimmy Carter, former president of the US (1997); UN and its secretary-general Kofi Annan (2003); Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany (2013); and the Indian Space Research Organisation (2014). The 2017 Prize had gone to former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh.

Receiving the prize on behalf of CSE, its director general Sunita Narain said: “My colleagues and I accept this prize with gratitude, but also with the awareness that so much more needs to be done. All our work, all our efforts must add up – we have to make a difference in this increasingly climate change-risked and insecure world. Your recognition will give us the courage to persist. But more importantly, it underscores the imperative of action. Urgent action.”

Said Narain: “This honour means a lot to my colleagues and to me, because we believe Mrs Indira Gandhi brought the environmental concern to national stage in the 1970s -- it was she who was the only world leader who went to Stockholm in 1972 to attend the first global conference on environment and development; she brought in the water act; the air act; and most environmental legislations that have worked to safeguard us. She saw the need to address this existential crisis, before anyone else – environment was not a buzzword for her. It was real. It was urgent. Her foresight, her wisdom is what we need today.”

She added: “We must build public opinion on the imperative of change; keep the focus on the possibility (the sheer adventure) of the solution; be bold; fearless; and most importantly, ensure that we keep our credibility and independence... There is much more to do. The challenges are massive; daunting even. But we can’t give up. We have to be like that dog with the bone. Persist and persevere.”