

# Right Livelihood Award 40 years & Medellín Poetry Festival 30 years

## *Inspiring Change through Culture*

As the Right Livelihood Award is approaching its 40th Anniversary and the Medellín International Poetry Festival its 30th, our common global challenges are becoming increasingly acute and tangible when it comes to for example the climate crisis, authoritarian governance, the continuous threat of violent conflict including the use of nuclear weapons and growing inequality between rich and poor. The Right Livelihood Foundation, in cooperation with the Medellín International Poetry Festival (Right Livelihood Laureate 2006), will organise a three-part webinar series inviting Right Livelihood Laureates, others within the Right Livelihood network and poets. We want to provide a safe space for transformative ideas and visions. The focus will be on **Culture as a tool to inspire change**, and how to communicate the urgency of system change to the wider public. How can poets, musicians, activists and policymakers invited to the Poetry Festival best come together with science and Right Livelihood Laureates to trigger an urgent worldwide mobilisation around the pressing need for system change?

## *Defence of Earth and life, August 24*

The increasing effects of shrinking biodiversity, global warming, and other growing effects of human activities, are alarming and a significant threat to the planet's inhabitants. By learning from each other we can develop a deeper understanding of the effects and struggles in different parts of the world, but also find more creative ways to cooperate globally in the urgent fight for a major systems change. Fiore Longo from Survival International, Right Livelihood Laureate 1989; Francia Marques, an activist for indigenous rights to their land; Marije Langelaar, an artist, poet and writer; and Raúl Montenegro, Right Livelihood Laureate 2004, will engage in a conversation regarding the defence of earth and life in today's world, led by Felix Fuders, coordinator of the Right Livelihood College Campus Chile.

## Participants

### Felix Fuders

Felix is the coordinator of the Chilean Right Livelihood College (RLC) campus Austral, where he also serves as professor and researcher. The RLC is a global initiative linking young academics and civil society organisations connected to Right Livelihood Laureates. Felix has, together with colleagues at the RLC Campus Austral, worked on projects related to the development of rural areas, indigenous communities, and territories in conflict. One large focus of Felix's research is on the economic and ethical failures of the financial system, and how these lead to social, economic and ecological problems. He also serves as the Director of the Economic Policy chapter of the Transdisciplinary Research Centre for Socio Ecological Strategies for Forest Conservation (TESES).

### Fiore Longo

Fiore is a Research and Advocacy Officer at Survival International, as well as Director of the organisation's office in France. She is a cultural anthropologist who has carried out fieldwork with the Mapuche indigenous people in Chile, and currently works with Survival's "Guardians of Nature" campaign for a new model of environmental conservation that respects the rights of indigenous peoples and puts them at the forefront. Survival International was founded to assist tribal populations to exercise their rights to survival and self-determination. Since childhood, she has written stories and poetry. A short film based on her poem *Aequilibrium*, inspired by the Mapuche's relationship with nature, has been produced and selected for the Orobie Film Festival in Italy. Fiore is a strong advocate for the defense of land and life which she says is a fundamental issue in today's world, when the health of planet Earth is at risk.

### Francia Márquez

Francia became an activist already at the age of 13, when a dam construction threatened her community. She is using Afro-Colombian dance and music as key elements in both her cultural and political work. Francia is a local leader and has taken on the struggle for environmental and ancestral land rights, fighting incursions by multinational mining companies into La Toma, home to a quarter of a million afro-Colombians. Illegal miners have a huge impact on the environment, across the Amazon region. Francia organised the women of La Toma and stopped illegal gold

mining on their ancestral land. She has also educated local farmers in the region on sustainable agricultural techniques. Francia is currently studying law at Santiago de Cali University.

### **Raúl Montenegro**

Raúl has been working on bridging the gaps between the environment, development, universities, citizens and NGOs for decades. In 1982, he was the principal founder of FUNAM (Fundación para la Defensa del Ambiente) and has been its President since 1995. Presently, he is FUNAM's representative at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. In addition to his activism to protect natural resources, Raúl has been a Professor of Evolutionary Biology at the National University of Cordoba since 1985. In that role, he has come up with theoretical concepts to increase the knowledge and understanding of balanced ecosystems, on which he has also organised numerous conferences. Raúl also serves as the coordinator of the Right Livelihood College campus in Córdoba, Argentina.

### **Marije Langelaar**

Marije is an artist, award winning poet and writer. Her work gives expression to the natural forces that operate between people and their environment. As part of her interest, Marije founded, together with other like-minded individuals, a parent cooperative with a focus on children. The cooperative has started projects with a focus on cooperation, creativity, nature, yoga and self-awareness. Marije also works on developing a plan for a sustainable and conscious living that can be adapted to suit situations all over the world.