

PRESS RELEASE: October, 1998

Solar Electric Light Fund Receives Prestigious Environmental Award from Green Cross International

Nonprofit group that develops energy self-sufficiency in developing countries was honored at gala event attended by former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev

The Solar Electric Light Fund (SELF) received a prestigious Millennium Award in recognition of its work to develop energy self-sufficiency in developing countries at conservation organization Global Green USA's Third Annual Millennium Awards gala event held Friday, October 9, 1998 at the Four Seasons Hotel. Global Green USA is the American affiliate of Green Cross International, founded by President Mikhail Gorbachev.



The annual dinner, which salutes five environmental leaders, has become one of Los Angeles' most popular social events as the Millennium Award has gained recognition as an important environmental honor. The 1998 gala featured a stellar cast of luminaries, including President Gorbachev, Ted Turner and Jane Fonda, Ann and Jerry Moss, Alan Horn, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and Brad Hall. Other leaders were on hand, including David McTaggart, the founder of Greenpeace, and Chris Flavin of Worldwatch.

"The Millennium Awards, established in 1996, recognize and herald those who embody our mission, 'fostering a global value shift toward the environment,'" stated Matt Petersen, Executive Director of Global Green USA. "The Awards tell the story of these catalysts for change."

In honoring the Solar Electric Light Fund (SELF), Petersen said, "SELF is leading the way to help ensure that when the developing world becomes electrified, they won't spend billions of dollars on wasteful coal or nuclear power plants that will destroy the air, leave behind dangerous wastes, and accelerate climate change."

The awards dinner featured an address by President Gorbachev. While reflecting on the coming 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, key themes touched on the need to break down the walls in business, politics, and society to meet the environmental challenges of the coming millennium.

Bob Freling, Executive Director of SELF, accepted the award on behalf of the nonprofit. The other Millennium Award recipients included Ted Turner; Sir John Browne, Group Chief Executive of British Petroleum; Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Emmy Award-winning actress from the Seinfeld Show; and Winona LaDuke, Program Director of the Honor the Earth Fund.

SELF has been instrumental in the acceptance of solar-generated electricity through "solar seed" projects by providing technical assistance to and training programs for individuals in developing countries who have yet to be connected to a fossil-fuel powered national utility. The impact of SELF has been felt all over the world. In Sri Lanka, SELF launched SoLanka, the first "all-solar NGO", which has led to the formation of the Renewable Energy Service Company. In association with a local solar electric company, SELF developed a commercially sustainable village solar project in Indonesia, which has enhanced many of the tens of thousands of unelectrified villages scattered among thousands of remote islands. China was the recipient of a 600-household solar electrification program, which completed a 1000-house PV project in the Gansu Province, started in 1993. SELF is headquartered in Washington, DC.

Global Green USA works in cooperation with individuals, industry, and governments to create a global value shift toward sustainable development. The organization is active in promoting and accelerating the cleanup and sustainable reuse of military facilities, promoting the safe and environmentally responsible destruction of chemical weapons, the "greening" of affordable housing, and the prevention of international water conflicts.