

Press release from the Volvo Environment Prize Foundation

World-leading atmospheric researcher Susan Solomon arrives in Sweden for her Volvo Environment Prize

Dr Susan Solomon is one of the world's leading atmospheric chemists and is in Sweden to receive the Volvo Environment Prize on 5 November in Stockholm. The prize, this year worth SEK 1.5m (approx. € 150 000), is celebrating its 20th anniversary. It has become one of the science world's most respected environmental awards.

Ever since 1986, when as a 30-year-old researcher she led her first expedition to the Antarctic to study the ozone hole, Susan Solomon has been active in researching how the earth's climate and atmosphere react to human activity. Among other achievements, she was Co-chair of the UN's climate panel, IPCC. The panel's widely discussed report a few years ago contributed to the current global interest in climate issues. In a recent scientific article, Solomon warned that climate changes may last longer than previously thought — up to 1000 years, even if emissions diminish. This is because the oceans absorb carbon dioxide only slowly.

Susan Solomon has broad experience of atmospheric research as well as work on policy and agreements to protect the ozone layer and counteract climate change. Her achievements as an on-site researcher in the Antarctic contributed to the so-called Montreal Protocol, the international agreement for protection of the ozone layer in the stratosphere. Susan Solomon claims that many lessons from that work can be applied at the imminent climate summit in Copenhagen, COP 15, in December. She argues that a substantial opportunity exists to create a low-carbon society and that international agreements can be reached more swiftly than pessimists believe.

- "It is incredibly important that we have correct scientific information when making decisions," says Susan Solomon. "I find it encouraging that so many people today, across the world, are absorbing increased knowledge about the climate issue. And when we now know how long our impact will last, I believe people and governments will make better decisions about how much carbon dioxide we emit."

Several leading international researchers are on the jury for the Volvo Environmental Prize. The jury's motivation says in part:

"Dr Susan Solomon is an outstanding atmospheric chemist and physicist whose pioneering scientific contributions have had major impacts on crucial environmental policies."

During her visit, Susan Solomon will participate in seminars in Gothenburg and Stockholm.

Dr Susan Solomon is Senior Scientist at the Chemical Sciences Division, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Boulder, Colorado, USA.

High-resolution pictures of Susan Solomon and a film about her achievements (approx. 10 minutes) will be available on the Volvo Environment Prize website www.environment-prize.com from Monday 2 November 2009.

For more information about the Volvo Environment Prize and this year's winner, please contact Professor Oliver Lindqvist, tel. +46 (0)31-772 28 62 or Dr Helene Bergsten, scientific advisor to the Volvo Environment Prize, tel. +46 (0)31-772 4950.

For an opportunity to interview Susan Solomon, please contact Kajsa Claude, tel. +46(0)70 – 674 01 94, e-mail kajsa.claude@westander.se or Claes Sjöberg, tel. +46(0) 70-662 64 71, e-mail claes@tomorrow.se

The Volvo Environment Prize is celebrating its 20th anniversary. It is an annual award to individuals responsible for major scientific discoveries or inventions within the field of environment and sustainability. The prize is financed by Volvo but conferred by an independent foundation. The prize consists of a diploma, a glass sculpture and a cash award of SEK 1.5m (approx. €150 000). Since the first award in 1990, the prize has gone to 36 people. Among them are many well-known names and three Nobel Prize winners.