



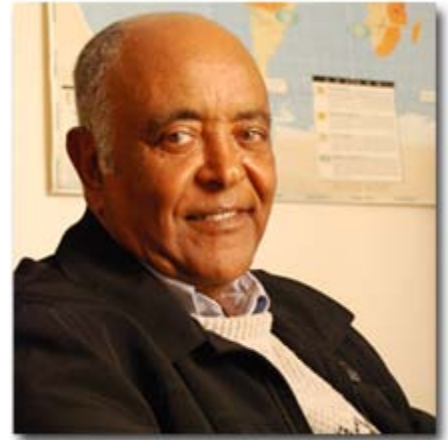
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Seeds of Survival Founder Awarded for Protecting Farmers' Rights USC Canada's Dr. Melaku Worede presented with Herman Warsh Memorial Award.

Bali, Indonesia, March 20, 2011 – *Dr. Melaku Worede*, USC Canada's Scientific Advisor and renowned for his pioneering work restoring Ethiopia's lost genetic diversity, has been awarded the *Herman Warsh Memorial Award* for outstanding service to the genetic resources community.

At a recent meeting in Bali, Indonesia (March 14-18), the governing body of the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)* awarded Dr. Melaku for these and his many other contributions to the goals of promoting the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural genetic resources and the protection of farmers' rights.



A scientist who puts the farmer first, Melaku's work with USC Canada's award-winning *Seeds of Survival program* has helped foster global recognition for the vitally important role farmers play in increasing and conserving on-farm biodiversity.

Melaku has been indispensable to our *Seeds of Survival* approach, having helped to launch that program in the late 1980s. We at USC would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to Melaku and congratulate him on this well-deserved honour.

The award is presented in the name of Mr. Herman Warsh who supported the conservation, sustainable use, and equitable sharing of genetic resources since 1981. He and his family have donated more than \$5 million to community-based in-situ and ex-situ seed conservation and to the related policy issues including Farmers' Rights. Warsh passed away in April 2006, fully aware of the importance of this Treaty to humanity.

For more information, Sheila Petzold, USC Canada (613) 234-6827 x245

Biography: Melaku Worede

Melaku Worede was born in Ethiopia in 1936. After obtaining a PhD in Agronomy from the University of Nebraska (USA), he returned to Ethiopia to help create the Plant Genetic Resources

Centre (PGRC) in Addis Ababa. In 1979, Dr. Melaku became Director of the gene bank, a post he held until his retirement in 1993.

Since then, Dr. Melaku has continued to serve as the scientific advisor to the worldwide Seeds of Survival program of USC Canada – a Canadian civil society organization that began working with him on seed conservation in the 1980s.

Simultaneously, Dr. Melaku has been a mentor to the African Biodiversity Network and has served on numerous boards including Bioversity International. In the early '90s, he served as the chair of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources and played a key role in preparing the ground for the International Undertaking to become today's ITPGRFA. He was also one of the main negotiators during the strategically important Keystone International Dialogue on Plant Genetic Resources in the late 80s and early 90s.

Throughout his career – and life – Dr. Melaku has won international admiration and recognition for two extraordinary passions: his commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources – not only in Ethiopia and Africa but around the world – and his commitment to Farmers' Rights and the vital role of peasant agriculture in conserving and strengthening crop genetic diversity.

In the mid-1980s during the famine in the Horn of Africa, Dr. Melaku and his colleagues at the Ethiopian gene bank worked tirelessly to both collect endangered seeds and to distribute seeds from the gene bank directly back into the hands of farmers for their own needs and breeding. **He was the first gene bank director anywhere in the world to champion the role of farmers in this work.**

These continue to be his passion today. In recognition of his contribution, Dr. Melaku received *the Right Livelihood Award* in the Swedish Parliament in 1991. In 2008 the National Green Award Foundation, headed by the Ethiopian president, gave Dr. Melaku the *Outstanding International Contribution Award*.



USC Canada supports vibrant family farms, strong rural communities, and healthy ecosystems around the world, working with partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America. USC Canada acknowledges the generous support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).