

A ₹50 Crore Grant to ATREE, the Environmental Think Tank

Bengaluru, March 31 2021.

Rohini Nilekani, noted philanthropist and author, pledged INR 50 Crores (USD 6.8 Million) to ATREE (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore). INR 25 crores is a direct grant, while the remaining INR 25 crores are matching funds for new grants ATREE raises from other sources.

“Now more than ever, we require institutions that serve as an important bridge between academics, civil society and policymakers, bringing insights from long term research and data to support relevant decision making and shaping public discourse,” said Nilekani. “The gift is a testament to the importance and urgency of ATREE’s work in the face of our multiplying ecological challenges.”

ATREE enters its 25th year of interdisciplinary research focused on carrying out policy-oriented research, outreach, and education in the field of environmental conservation and sustainable development. The founder of ATREE, Dr Kamal Bawa, noted that “These additional resources will allow ATREE to consolidate and expand our programs to meet our growing environmental challenges such as the loss of biodiversity, water scarcity, and climate change. These challenges are inextricably linked to the resilience for our future. Already, the pandemic has further exposed our vulnerability to our deteriorating relationship with nature.”

Bawa continued, “Indeed, we are grateful to Rohini for placing ATREE in the perfect position to embark on significant action research initiatives to help redefine “development” by building on the core research that we have conducted over the past two decades.”

ATREE, established in 1996, has a mission to generate rigorous interdisciplinary knowledge for achieving environmental conservation and sustainable development in a socially just manner, enable the use of this knowledge by policymakers and society, and train the next generation of scholars and leaders. ATREE has been consistently ranked among the top 20 environmental think tanks globally and the top 2 in Asia by the University of Pennsylvania index report. “The gift represents an exemplary philanthropic vision for ATREE,” said Director Dr Nitin Pandit, “to engage people and communities in applying the science of the environment to face our fragile futures.”

“The gift will allow the continued growth of ATREE and enable the organisation to enter the next dynamic phase of development and growth toward impactful research through civic engagement, policy design, and institutional innovation,” said Professor P. Balaram, Co-Chair of ATREE’s Board of Trustees.

Rohini Nilekani, Founder-Chairperson of Arghyam, is on the Board of Trustees of ATREE. Her pledge is exemplary in the long-term vision necessary for the philanthropic support of civil society in India. She is the Founder-Chairperson of Arghyam, a foundation she set up for sustainable water and sanitation, which funds initiatives all across India. She is the Co-founder

and Director of EkStep, a non-profit education platform. She serves on the Eminent Persons Advisory Group of the Competition Commission of India. In 2017, she, together with her husband Nandan Nilekani, signed the Giving Pledge, which commits half their wealth to philanthropic causes.

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