

# Leadership Now!

## SEVERN CULLIS-SUZUKI

Environmental Activist



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David Strongman

Severn Cullis-Suzuki has been active in environmental and social justice work since kindergarten. At age 9, after witnessing acts of destruction of the Brazilian Amazon, she started the Environmental Children's Organization, which consisted of a group of children committed to learning and teaching other kids about environmental issues. They were successful in raising enough money to appear at 1992's Rio Earth Summit, and 12-year-old Severn delivered a powerful speech that gained worldwide attention. For this she was honoured with the UN Environment Program's Global 500 Award at a ceremony in Beijing, China.

In 2002, as a member of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's Special Advisory Panel, Cullis-Suzuki introduced a pledge called the Recognition of Responsibility to the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. The trip also was the subject of a documentary film that aired on CBC's long-running documentary series *The Nature of Things*.

Cullis-Suzuki has spoken worldwide on the necessity of redefining our values, acting with the future in mind, and listening to children. She co-founded the Skyfish Project, an Internet-based think tank that encourages youth to speak out for their future and adopt a sustainable lifestyle.

Cullis-Suzuki has completed a Bachelor of Science in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Yale University, and more recently, a Masters in Ethnobotany from the University of Victoria, British Columbia. She hopes her pursuit of traditional and scientific knowledge will help her mandate of promoting a culture of diversity, sustainability and joy.

For more information visit [http://www.speakers.ca/cullis-suzuki\\_severn.aspx](http://www.speakers.ca/cullis-suzuki_severn.aspx)