



THE UNITED NATIONS SASAKAWA AWARD FOR DISASTER REDUCTION



Ceremony 2001

10 October, Palais des Nations, Geneva

"International Actions for Natural Disaster Reduction"

Natural Disaster Reduction



*"The Global Fire
Monitoring Center"*



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Foreword from the Director ISDR

Global warming and related climate change, growing population, urban development and subsequent anarchic land-use management as well as unsustainable development practices represent exacerbating factors to the vulnerability of modern societies to natural hazards. Natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters affect developing and industrialized countries alike, endangering dramatically their sustainable economic development by redirecting financial resources, originally dedicated to development, towards relief assistance activities in the aftermaths of a disaster. It is therefore essential to promote any activity aimed at reducing natural hazards and the impact of disasters on the most vulnerable communities in a cost-effective manner.

We have *the moral imperative* to create a culture of prevention, so as to promote an equal access to disaster preven-

tion technologies and to reduce the vulnerability of human beings at risk from disasters. The United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Prevention represents an important tool for awareness raising, as well as a key vehicle for the dissemination of the disaster reduction message, in particular to the most remote communities. It gives appropriate recognition to local efforts as well as to traditional and indigenous knowledge and achievements, thereby contributing to the identification of the most successful and innovative practices in disaster reduction worldwide. The Award represents a central element of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR) and deserves increased visibility at the international level, so as to contribute to the empowerment and full commitment of communities at risk from natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters as well as to building a safer world for all in the twenty-first century. ■

Sálvano Briceño



Message from the Director for International Relations of the Nippon Foundation

2001 marks the fourteenth year since the creation of the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction and it is a sincere pleasure for the Nippon Foundation to note the tremendous accomplishments made so far in making of the Earth a safer place to live for all. Every new technology and innovative approach in disaster reduction identified through the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reductions is a step forward in reducing risk and protecting vulnerable communi-

ties from the devastating impact of natural disasters. A long way has been made since the first United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction process, and the Nippon Foundation looks forward to continuing sponsoring this major international fruitful event, to enhance world people to pursue their role as the central actors in developing a global culture of prevention. ■

Tatsuya Tanami

Some History

The United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is, together with WHO Sasakawa Health Prize and the UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize, one of the three prestigious prizes established in 1986 by Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa, the founding Chairman of the Nippon Foundation (formerly the Sasakawa Foundation/Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation), in order to contribute to international initiatives of a humanitarian nature aimed at improving social, cultural and economic well-being and at combating poverty around the world.

The United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is presented annually to individuals or institutions which have been selected by the Jury for the Sasakawa for their outstanding contributions to the prevention of disasters and the reduction of vulnerability worldwide, consistent with the aims and objectives of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR). The Award may

be shared among different winners. The exact amount is to be decided each year by the Administrator of the award, the ISDR Secretariat, on the basis of the sum available from the interest which has accrued in the Endowment Fund, and after consultation with Jury members. It will be worth US\$ 50,000 for the year 2001.

The United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction was first administered by the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO). In 1998, the Secretariat for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) was assigned responsibility to administer the Award. Since January 2000, the Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which succeeded the IDNDR arrangements, has taken over this responsibility. The ceremony of presentation of the award is usually held on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, every second Wednesday of October. ■

The Founder

Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa committed himself to activities contributing to world peace. He participated, in 1979, in the Peace Forum organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, as a member of the Japanese delegation; he also received the United Nations Scroll of Appreciation praising for his "personal

support and excellent philanthropy in the cause of improved standing and cooperation", and instituted the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation to combat smallpox and leprosy. In 1982, the then United Nations Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, presented him with the United Nations Peace Medal. ■

The Nippon Foundation

The "Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation" became successfully the "Sasakawa Foundation" and the "Nippon Foundation", originally to provide assistance in the development of maritime affairs and vessels. It is an independent, non profit grant-making organization which was established in 1962 by legislation setting aside 3.3 percent of

the revenues from the motorboat racing to be used for philanthropic purposes, with activities mainly geared towards the alleviation of human suffering, the advancement of human welfare and the promotion of the world peace, without any considerations of policy, ideology, religion or race. The Foundation is providing aid to project relating to public

welfare and voluntary programmes in Japan, maritime and ship-related projects as well as overseas cooperation assistance. Its annual spending for the year 2001 amounts approximately to US\$ 494.5 million, of which US\$ 49.8 million was spent for overseas cooperation assistance. ■

The Administrator of the Award : The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

During the 54th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Member States expressed concern regarding the increasing intensity and frequency of natural disasters around the world, resulting in severe and devastating damage to national economies and infrastructures, and in dramatic human suffering and loss of life. Developing countries and the industrialized world are affected alike by natural phenomena. During the debate, Member States stressed that disaster prevention is the long-term cost-effective solution to sustained economic growth and progress in the twenty-first century. They took the decision, in that context, that a unique international strategy and mechanism be established within the United Nations, following the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR,

1990-1999) under the supervision of the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, in order to build a safer world in the twenty first century through successful disaster prevention and vulnerability reduction. This international platform for disaster reduction should take on the ten-year acquired expertise and achievements of the IDNDR, especially in the fields of science and technology. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) was therefore established, as of 1st January 2000 through UNGA resolution 54/219. Its major objectives are to enable communities to become resilient to the effects of natural, technological and environmental hazards, by reducing the compound risks they pose to social and economic vulnerabilities within modern societies, and to proceed from protection against hazards

to the management of risk through the integration of risk reduction into sustainable development. These goals might be achieved through increasing public awareness on the issue of risk, motivating more focused public administration policies, enhancing a more equitable access to science and technology for risk reduction for all communities, and enhancing public understanding and involvement in these endeavors. The implementation of the ISDR will be carried out through an Inter-Agency Secretariat in Geneva, which will support an Inter-Agency Task Force composed of representatives from UN agencies, regional entities and representatives from civil society for the shaping and coordination of strategic policies for disaster reduction and the enhancement of political mobilization for the issue of prevention. ■

The 2001 Ceremony of the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction

The ceremony of the 14th United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction took place on Wednesday 10 October 2001, Room XVI, Palais des Nations, on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction. The celebration comprised two separate events, including an official ceremony of delivery of the prize with the exceptional participation of Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), as the Guest of Honour of the ceremony, and a roundtable discussion on the "Vision and Perspectives for Disaster Reduction in the 21st Century" involving international experts in disaster reduction from the scientific community, academic institutions, the private sector and the media.

Mr. Petrovsky, who was terminating his mandate with the United Nations at



From left to right : The Director ISDR, Mr Briceño, the Director General of UNOG, Mr Petrovsky and the Director for International Relations of the Nippon Foundation, Mr Tanami, presenting the Sasakawa Trophy to the Director of GFMC, Mr Goldammer.

the end of 2001, opened the ceremony by reaffirming disaster reduction as a top priority of the UN agenda. He took the opportunity to welcome the ISDR Secretariat as a key component of the International Geneva's activities towards the promotion of sustainable de-

velopment, human rights and humanitarian assistance in view of securing world peace and development. The 11 September tragedy in the USA was present in the statements made by the Director General of UNOG, the Director of International Relations of the Nippon Foundation and the Director ISDR, illustrating the vulnerability of humankind in front of disasters, be they from natural origin or man-made such as terrorism. Emphasis was therefore placed on reiterating the importance of prevention, as a global concept for reducing vulnerabilities that are at the base of all disasters.

The Director General of UNOG then proceeded with the presentation of the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction and the cheque of 50,000 USD to the Laureate 2001, the **Global Fire Monitoring Center**

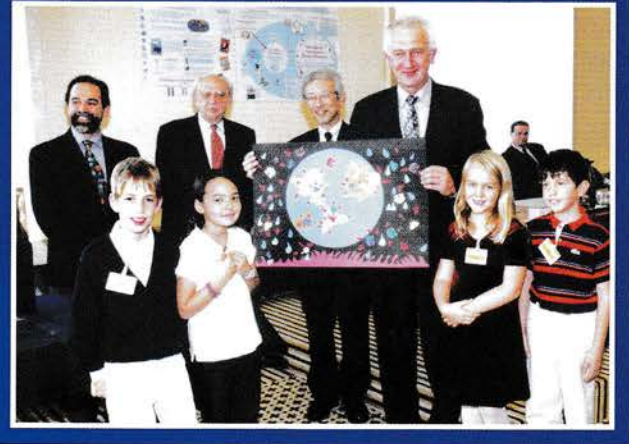
(GPMC) of Freiburg, Germany, represented on that occasion by its Director, Mr. Johann Goldammer and the GPMC Team. GPMC was selected unanimously by the Sasakawa Jury in view of its long-term commitment to disaster reduction and continued research activities for the reduction of wildland fires worldwide, as well as for its multiple cooperation projects in developing countries, involving local communities (see description of achievements in Box 1). A friendly delegation of young school children from the Geneva International School also rewarded the GPMC with the winning drawing of the international drawing contest organized by the ISDR Secretariat, illustrating disaster reduction.

Following the decision of the Sasakawa Jury, the **Philippines Institute of Volcanology (PHIVOLCS)**, Manila, **Dr. Brian Ward**, a UK citizen and **Professor Isaac Nyambok**, from Kenya were rewarded on that occasion with **Certificates of Distinction**, thereby paying tribute to their respective achievements

in the field of disaster reduction as a contribution to development programmes at the national and international level.

Certificates of Merit were also presented on that occasion to the **Nyos-Mounou Degassing Programme (NMDP) Advisory Committee** from Cameroon, the **Oficina Nacional de Emergencia (ONEMI)** from Chile, the **Comisión Permanente de Contingencias (COPECO)** from Honduras and the **National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET-Nepal)**, as a recognition for their multiple efforts and achievements in promoting disaster reduction at the national level

From left to right : The Director ISDR, Mr Briceño, accompanied by the Director General of UNOG, Mr Petrovsky, the Director of External Affairs of the Nippon Foundation, Mr Tanami, and a group of school children from the Geneva International School handing over the winning drawing of the international 2001 drawing contest on disaster reduction to the Director of the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GPMC), Mr Goldammer.



despite significant constraints and obstacles, in particular of a financial nature, to development efforts at the national level. ■
(See further details on each awardee in box N°2)

Brief overview of GPMC's contribution to disaster reduction worldwide

A detailed presentation was made by the Director of the **Global Fire Monitoring Center (GPMC)**, **Mr. Goldammer**, on GPMC's scientific activities as well as its various initiatives and projects worldwide. He stressed in particular GPMC's regional initiatives towards creating awareness in the general public or at policy-making levels in developing countries, with the objective of sharing GPMC's experience and knowledge on wildfire prevention as a kind of lessons learned to serve as models for replication and adaptation in countries and communities living with similar threats worldwide. A major achievement of the year 2000 was the support brought by the GPMC to the government of Ethiopia in managing a large fire disaster in February-April 2000. The GPMC contributed to assess the disaster situation and participated actively in the call for international assistance in managing the large fire disaster. Like in Indonesia, Guatemala and

Namibia, the GPMC supported the government in setting up a Round Table on Fire Management in which all stakeholders took an active part, including the local communities, in order to define a common national strategy for long-term fire prevention and management. One example is the creation of the "Indonesian Research Institute for Climate, Environment and Society" (INRICES) which was officially launched in 1997 with the support of the GPMC/FERG.

The main achievement of the overall work of the GPMC is the creation of a user-oriented interface between science, application and policy development, and the promotion of an interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approach in building partnerships, including at the international level. This approach proved to be valuable in the scientific domain in the development of wildland fires early-warning

systems worldwide, for which GPMC benefits from a wealth of expertise and networking. The GPMC has been developing, in that context, a Global Fire Monitoring System which includes early warning systems of wildland fires (forest fires and fires in other vegetation types), the compilation of near-real time or regular fire situation updates through a global network of data providers, the assistance to developing countries to build capacities in fire prevention and fire management systems/policies, and decision-support for policy-making institutions at international levels.

The countries bordering the Baltic Region, including Russia and its vast fire-endangered forests, are another example of GPMC's focus of activity. With the design and implementation of **BALTEX FIRE 2000** (the Baltic Exercise for Fire Information and Resources Exchange - 2000) the GPMC brought together

all nations concerned in a regional strategic conference and common fire exercise. The GFMC established, with the support of the German Foreign Office and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, a Fire Webserver at the Academy of Sciences in Krasnoyarsk aimed at providing near-real time satellite-generated fire maps of Siberia. The GFMC was rewarded by Russia for this initiative with the medal "For the Protection of the Forests of Russia" in recognition of GFMC's long-term

involvement and commitment to forest fire protection. An international ECE/FAO/ILO Conference on Forest Fires in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia will be held in Turkey in early 2003.

The GFMC has also been working in close cooperation with the United Nations system on repeated occasions, as the coordinator of the UN FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire and as

part of the United Nations Inter Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction for which GFMC acts as the coordinator of Working Group IV on Wildland Fires. The GFMC also supported the United Nations 2000 World Disaster Reduction Campaign (ISDR) in the creation of educational materials and a poster contained in the kit "Disaster Prevention: Education and Youth - The Specific Case of Wildfires". Further information on the initiatives presented above is available at <http://www.uni-freiburg.de/fireglobe/>. ■

Roundtable discussions on the "Vision and Perspectives for Disaster Reduction in the Twenty First Century"

The roundtable discussion was chaired by the Director UN/ISDR, Mr. Briceño, and grouped together international experts from a wide range of sectors from the disaster management area, including academic institutions, scientists the media and practitioners. The panellists were invited to make a brief presentation of their activities in disaster reduction thereby launching the debate on the way how to promote further the concept of disaster reduction worldwide in the twenty-first century, based on their respective experiences, as well as lessons learned and best practices identified to achieve a concrete reduction of the vulnerability and of disaster risk at the community level. The idea being to elaborate further on successful experiences liable to be replicated for other natural hazards or adapted to the specificity and particular requirements of a region in terms of vulnerability and prone character to disasters.



Ceremony of the 2001 United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction. Roundtable discussions on "Vision and Perspectives for Disaster Reduction in the 21st Century" with high-level experts from the disaster reduction constituency.

Among other critical issues was raised the need to further enhance the development of integrated advocacy programmes for disaster reduction which should be composed of strong awareness-raising initiatives as well as training programmes for all actors involved in disaster reduction as well as in other related fields of activity, in particular the development and environmental areas, so as to facilitate a better understanding of

natural disasters and of the economic, human, social and environmental benefit of disaster reduction initiatives in the long term for most vulnerable countries and communities. Education was recognized as the central element of participatory disaster reduction strategies and a consensus was reached on the fact that it should start from the earlier stages of school programmes and curricula to contribute to the strengthening of a global culture of prevention through the youngest actors, the children, as the decision-makers of tomorrow. The ISDR Secretariat was acknowledged as the lead international mechanism in promoting such a message and in coordinating international action in this respect.

Emphasis was also placed on the need, for the scientists, to keep improving early warning systems and adapt them to the different kind of hazards predominating in vulnerable areas. It was reiterated that such an improvement should not only be of a highest technological nature but should also integrate indigenous knowledge and know-how. The involvement of local communities in the early stages of the decision-making process towards the development of disaster reduction strategies, associated to basic educational programmes and training, are significant success factors for the concrete implementation of ISDR at the local level. The notion of "perception of risk" is also an important element to integrate. It is only if the message is understandable that it will be accepted and implemented. The decision-makers and highest political spheres have also a central role to play in facilitating the integration of disaster reduction within national development planning and in implementing disaster reduction strategies at the national level through appropriate legal mechanisms. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) was reaffirmed as a central partner of national governments as well as essential mechanism in that context, in particular in establishing the bridge between scientists and decision-maker in view of translating the scientific knowledge into concrete applications of disaster reduction at the national level. ■

ACHIEVEMENTS REWARDED IN 2001

Certificates of Distinction

• **Philippines Institute of Volcanology (PHIVOLCS), Manila Philippines**

Was selected for its long-term commitment to disaster reduction and its leading role in disaster reduction activities in Central Asia, in particular with regard to earthquakes and volcanoes, with the involvement of local communities.

PHIVOLCS was represented at the ceremony by Ms. Corazón de León, former Chair, Service Commission of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

• **Mr. Brian Ward, Bangkok, Thailand**

Was selected for being the initiator and "Founding father" of what has become since then, the leading institution for disaster reduction projects, training activities and educational projects in South east Asia.

Dr. Ward was represented at the ceremony by Mr. Terry Jeggle.

• **Professor Isaac Nyambok, Nairobi, Kenya**

Was selected for his personal commitment to disaster reduction, and in particular, for establishing a "Post graduate disaster management course" at the University of Nairobi accessible to all communities, including high-level officials interested in disaster reduction in Africa.

Professor Nyambok was represented at the ceremony by Mr. Joseph Busiega, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the UN in Geneva.

The Director ISDR, Mr Briceño, the Director for International Relations of the Nippon Foundation, Mr Tanami, and the Director of the Laureate German Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), Mr Goldammer, surrounded by the recipients of Certificates of Distinction and of Merit 2001.



Certificates of Merit

• **National Society of Earthquake Technology (NSET-Nepal), Kathmandu, Nepal**

Was selected for its tremendous awareness-raising and educational programmes for disaster reduction, in particular in the field of seismic risk reduction, for the benefit and with the involvement of the local communities and decision-makers in Nepal. The certificates serves as an encouragement for NSET to pursue its activities in disaster reduction at the country level such as the Kathmandu Valley Action Plan, with a strong potential for implementation in several parts of Nepal and for replicability for other kinds of natural hazards.

NSET-Nepal was represented at the ceremony by its Director, Mr. Amod Dixit.

• **Oficina Nacional de Emergencia (ONEMI), Santiago de Chile**

Was rewarded for its significant educational activities and awareness-raising programmes on disaster reduction, in particular in communications strategies for schools security, as part of ONEMI's mandate in civil protection.. Strong presence and impact in LAC, including with the national decision-makers.

ONEMI was represented at the ceremony by Mr. Felipe Ernst, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Chile to the United Nations in Geneva.

• **Comisión Permanente de Contingencias (COPECO), Tegucigalpa, Honduras**

Was rewarded for its significant initiatives in the field of promotion and awareness-raising on disaster reduction, including forest fires, as well as for its strong consideration of the local communities' vulnerability and specific requirements. Works in close cooperation with the population to implement disaster reduction initiatives, and places strong emphasis on communication strategies development accessible to all.

COPECO was represented at the ceremony by Her Excellency Ms. Olmeda Rivera Ramirez, Ambassador of Honduras to the United Nations in Geneva.

• **Nyos-Monoun Degassing Programme (NMDP) Advisory Committee, Yaoundé, Cameroon**

Was rewarded for the innovative character of the lake degassing initiative, in particular in a developing country and with the involvement of local communities. Is an encouragement to pursue efforts in refining the project and promoting its replication for similar threats at the regional level.

Nyos-Monoun Degassing Programme Advisory Committee was represented at the ceremony by Mr. Klaus Tietze and Mr. Michel Halbwachs on behalf of the whole team.



BOX 1: GFMC's achievements in disaster reduction worldwide

Since its creation in 1998, the GFMC has been working continuously in close consultation with the international community to reduce the socio-economic impact of wildfires worldwide through the introduction of scientific and technical innovations for improved forecasting and early warning systems. The GFMC also contributed to the promotion of a common understanding and public awareness of wildfire reduction mechanisms through the organization of international seminars and "National Round-Tables on Fire Management". The involvement of local communities in the implementation of GFMC's fire management projects, in particular former fire-fighters, have always been crucial for their success in the field. The GFMC, in close cooperation with the Fire Ecology Research Group (FERG), played a major role in mitigating the smoke crisis in South East Asia in 1997-98, and recently supported the Government of Ethiopia in managing a large scale fire disaster. Its echo with national governments, in particular in developing countries, is gaining weight, leading sometimes, as in the case of Indonesia, to the creation of governmental institutions such as the Indonesian Research Institute for Climate, Environment and Society. The GFMC has also contributed to setting up a Private-Public-Partnership (PPP) approach in involving commercial enterprises and suppliers in disaster management, thereby widening the range of actors involved in disaster management, in particular wildfire reduction, and committed to developing a global culture of prevention. For more information on GFMC and its activities, please visit (www.uni-freiburg.de). ■

BOX 2: 2001 Sasakawa Selection

Laureate 2001

- Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), Freiburg, Germany

Certificates of Distinction

- Professor Isaac Nyambok, Nairobi, Kenya
- Philippines Institute of Volcanology (PHIVOLCS), Manila, Philippines
- Dr. Brian Ward, Bangkok, Thailand

Certificates of Merit

- Nyos-Monoun Degassing Programme Advisory Committee, Yaoundé, Cameroon
- Oficina Nacional de Emergencia (ONEMI), Santiago de Chile, Chile
- Comisión Permanente de Contingencias (COPECO), Tegucigalpa, Honduras
- National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET-Nepal), Kathmandu, Nepal

Past Laureates of the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reducion

- 2000** Fondo para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo Social del Eje Cafetero (FOREC), Colombia
- 1999** Professor Mustafa Erdik, Turkey
- 1998** H.E. Mr. Duo Ji Cai Rang, China
Professor Wang Ang-Sheng, China
- 1997** Observatorio Sismológico del Sur Occidente (Osso), Colombia, Dr. A. S. Arya, India
- 1996** Dr. Ian Davis, United Kingdom
- 1995** " No Laureate "
- 1994** National Emergency Commission, Costa Rica
- 1993** Dr. Vit Karnik, Czeck Republic
- 1992** Geophysical Institute of the National Polytechnic School, Ecuador
- 1991** Mr. Franco Barberi, Italy
- 1990** Mr. Julio Kuroiwa, Peru
- 1989** Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Ethiopia
- 1988** ESCAP/Typhoon Committee, Philippines
- 1987** Ratu Kamisese Mara, Fiji