

# **2001 UNITED NATIONS SASAKAWA AWARD FOR DISASTER REDUCTION**

## **Ceremony of Delivery of the Prize,**

**Wednesday 10 October 2001, Room XVI, Palais des Nations, 14:30**

### **Address by Sálvano Briceño Director ISDR**

Dear Mr. Petrovsky,  
Dear Mr. Tanami,  
Dear Ambassadors,  
Dear Laureates,  
Dear colleagues and distinguished participants,

I am very pleased to welcome all of you today at the 2001 Ceremony of the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction, on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction. I am particularly grateful and honoured to welcome Mr. Petrovsky, the Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and Mr. Tanami, Director for International Relations and Special Projects at the Nippon Foundation, whose presence here today is an evidence of the recognition, by the international community, of disaster reduction as a top priority concern on the international agenda.

As we are all too aware, the challenges posed by natural disasters to our social and economic development, as well as to the world peace and stability, is greater than ever. During the 1990s, there was a ten per cent annual increase in the economic loss generated by disasters worldwide, and current projections for the future indicate that, without aggressive disaster reduction interventions, the economic cost of disasters will account for a significant part of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Our world is becoming more and more vulnerable as a result of the unsustainable consuming and development patterns of modern societies, coupled with rapid population growth and the subsequent unplanned urban development in disaster prone areas. Climate change also represents an exacerbating factor of existing natural hazards, and contributes to an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters worldwide inflicting unprecedented human hardship and suffering in many countries.

In this increasingly instable international context, disaster reduction appears as an urgent approach for ensuring long-term protection against the impact of disasters. The most successful and innovative technological advances and scientific progress for disaster reduction do not mean anything if they are not shared and understood by communities in need of protection from disasters. Awareness-raising and education on disaster reduction,

which are part of ISDR's primary functions, play a central role in disaster reduction strategies, in support of technology transfer and information sharing. The annual World Disaster Reduction Campaigns, which culminate on the International Day for Disaster Reduction, every second Wednesday of October, represent a powerful mechanism to mobilize all sectors of society around selected themes dealing with different aspects of disaster reduction. The United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction has also been gaining visibility and recognition at the international level, and proves to be an excellent vehicle to disseminate and promote the disaster reduction message worldwide.

By rewarding the most innovative approaches to disaster reduction, the Sasakawa Award indeed encourages the application of science and technology at the local level, as well as technology transfer and experience sharing, thereby contributing to the strengthening of community-based capacity-building and the recognition of valuable indigenous knowledge and traditional know-how in disaster reduction. The ISDR Secretariat, as the Administrator of the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction, has witnessed over the recent years, thanks to more focused and simplified Sasakawa Award selection procedures, a broader access of local communities to disaster related information and technology, as well as an increased understanding on the ways to reduce and mitigate the impact of disasters.

The ISDR Secretariat is sincerely proud to contribute, through the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction, to ensuring a vital link to all vulnerable communities at threat even in the most remote areas, and to allow them an equal access to protection through the implementation of disaster reduction measures and capacity-building. Communities in disaster prone areas have a lot to learn from each other as well as experiences to share in disaster reduction and prevention. The ISDR Secretariat is fully committed to pursuing its efforts, in close cooperation with the Nippon Foundation, to strengthen the outreach of the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction in order to promote even further the disaster reduction message worldwide, for the benefit of the communities living with the permanent threat of natural disasters, with the ultimate objective of building a safer world for all in the twenty first century.

We are now going to proceed with the delivery of the Sasakawa Award and of the Certificates of Distinction and of Merit, and I am pleased to invite Mr. Petrovsky and Mr. Tanami to move to the Trophy table, from where we will announce, individually, the names of the Laureates 2001.

**We are pleased to deliver a Certificate of Merit to the following recipients:**

- 1) Mr. Felipe Ernst, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Chile to the UN in Geneva, on behalf of the Oficina Nacional de Emergencia de Chile, Señor Ernst, muchas felicitaciones a la ONEMI,
- 2) Mr. Klaus Tietze, who will receive a Certificate of Merit on behalf of the Nyos-Monoun Degassing Programme Advisory Committee of Cameroon. Mr. Tietze and Mr. Halbwachs who is also present here today, have played a major role in the development

of this innovative project in Cameroon,. Congratulations to both of you on behalf of the NMDP Advisory Committee.

3) Mr. Amod Dixit, Director of the National Society of Earthquake Technology (NSET), Nepal

Mr. Dixit, congratulations for this well deserved Certificate of Merit or your Organization in Nepal

4) Her Excellency, Ms. Olmeda Rivera Ramirez, Ambassador of Honduras to the United Nations in Geneva, who will receive the Certificate of Merit on behalf of the Comité Permanente De Contingencias (COPECO), from Honduras.

Su Excelencia, es un honor remitirle el Certificado de Mérito en nombre de COPECO, felicitaciones

**We are now pleased to proceed with the delivery of the Certificates of Distinction:**

1) One of them goes to Mr. Joseph Busiega, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the UN in Geneva, who will receive the Certificate of Distinction on behalf of Professor Isaac Nyambok from Kenya

Mr. Busiega, please convey our congratulations to Professor Nyambok

2) Mr. Terry Jeggle will also receive a Certificate of Distinction on behalf of Mr. Brian Ward, from Thailand, one of the founding administrators of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) in Bangkok. Mr. Terry Jeggle took over responsibilities from Mr. Brian Ward as the Director of ADPC, and we are pleased to deliver the Certificate of Distinction to you; please congratulate Mr. Ward on our behalf.

3) Ms Corazón de León, former Chair, Civil Service Commission of the Government of the Philippines will also receive a Certificate of Distinction on behalf of the Philippines Institute of Volcanology (PHIVOLCS), from Manila

Ms. Corazón de León, congratulations to PHIVOLCS for this Certificate of Distinction.

We can now proceed with the **delivery of the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction** to the Laureate 2001, the Global Fire Monitoring Centre, who is represented today by its Director, Mr. Johann Goldammer, who came accompanied by several colleagues from GFMC, Mr. Alexander Held and Ms. Mirjam Blasel who have contributed to the success of the GFMC's activities and deserve our recognition.

Mr. Goldammer, we are pleased to hand over to you, as the representative of the Global Fire Monitoring Centre of Freiburg, Germany, the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction for the excellent work carried out by GFMC in the field of wildfire reduction, together with a cheque of 50,000 USD which will, hopefully contribute to pursue your efforts of investigation for an increased protection of populations against the impact of disasters.

The school children from the International School of Geneva would now be pleased to reward you, their way, with drawings that they made on wildfire reduction.

We are now pleased to give the floor to Mr. Johann Goldammer to give a presentation of the innovative facilities for which the Sasakawa Jury decided to reward GFMC with the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction.

Mr. Goldammer, you have the floor.

*(Presentation of Mr. Goldammer)*

Thank you very much Mr. Goldammer for your most substantive presentation of the work of GFMC in the field of disaster reduction and wild fire reduction. We are confident that GFMC will continue contributing further to the human well being by advancing the cause of disaster reduction worldwide. We wish you as well as all recipients of Certificates all the best in pursuing your efforts in the field of disaster reduction to create a Global culture of prevention.

I am now pleased to invite you all to have a short coffee break before entering into the roundtable discussions on the Visions for the future of disaster reduction in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in which all of you are warmly welcome to participate..

Thank you very much, Mr. Petrovsky and Mr. Tanami for your constructive participation in the 2001 ceremony of the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction and your valuable contribution to the promotion of the disaster reduction message today.

Thank you.

**Invitation to a roundtable discussion / open debate with the floor.**

**Interventions:**

- Ms. Milbert, from IUED
- Professor wagner, from the Centre d'Etude et de Recherche Géologique (CERG) of the University of Geneva
- Mr. Halbwachs, from the NMDP Advisory Committee
- Mr. Tietze, from NMDP Advisory Committee
- Mr. Gaudru, from the European Society of Volcanology
- Ms. Corazón de León
- Mr. Terry Jeggle
- Mr. Goldammer

### **Summary of the conclusions of the discussions by the Director ISDR:**

- There is an urgent need to develop the disaster / risk reduction concept through knowledge integration and dissemination
- Strengthen training in disaster management and leadership
- Institutionalize the disaster reduction concept through ISDR national platforms for capacity-building or institutional strengthening. Need to mobilize the political spheres in view of achieving the necessary political will and awareness to take disaster reduction into consideration into the national development planning. This could be done through legislation, policy, organizational development, education, training and awareness, technical capacities, science and technology.
- Develop educational systems, integrating in particular disaster reduction into school curricula, teachers training and school disaster reduction resource centres
- Develop technical and scientific capacities, such as RADIUS for earthquakes, for other natural hazards

### **Closing message**

I wish to congratulate all participants present today and to thank them for their fruitful and successful interventions during the roundtable. I am glad to note the interest in disaster reduction expressed from the floor and find it extremely encouraging for the ISDR Secretariat, and for me in particular, as a newcomer in the disaster reduction domain, in order to pursue efforts in promoting the disaster reduction message worldwide, in particular to reach the vulnerable communities which most need protection

The ISDR Secretariat is fully committed to strengthening the visibility of the United Nations sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction at the international level, in close consultation with the Nippon Foundation, in order to make the earth a safer place for all to live.

A successful disaster reduction is not a matter of individual and isolated initiatives, but relies, on the contrary, on the involvement and commitment of all sectors of society for a coordinated and concerted action worldwide. Community involvement represents the key of success, and I therefore invite you all to become full players in contributing to a global culture of prevention, by nominating outstanding candidates from the disaster reduction constituency to the sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction next year.

The nomination process for the 2002 United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction should start by the end of November. You will all be informed in due time to submit nominations from your respective country or organization.

In the meantime, let me thank you all again for your active participation and contribution to the discussions today. I am now pleased to invite you all to take part in the cocktail organized at 18:00 at the Restaurant des Délégués at the eighth floor.