

# 2003

## United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction

*Laureate and Awardees' Achievements*

*Provided through an endowment fund from the  
Nippon Foundation to the United Nations*



日本財團



## **Laureate 2003**

**Mrs. Tadzong, née Esther Anwi Mofor,  
Global Centre for Compliance, Hazard and Disaster Management  
(GLOCECOHADIM), Bamenda, Cameroon**

*The Laureate of the 2003 UN Sasakawa Award, Mrs. Tadzong was selected for her personal commitment and her determination in overcoming obstacles that stood in the way of her reaching her objectives. The Jury was particularly impressed by the fact that she became a model for her community and had convinced politicians and government institutions alike that her ideals were worth pursuing and supporting.*

Mrs. Tadzong is the driving force behind the Cameroon-based NGO, the Global Centre for Compliance, Hazard and Disaster Management (GLOCECOHADIM), which was created to bring assistance to victims and survivors from the local population after a serious industrial accident in Cameroon. This initial experience of providing assistance to victims of a technological disaster was soon extended to developing and delivering disaster reduction services and support to local communities in the North-West Province of Cameroon.

Preparing the local community for disasters soon became the centrepiece of the NGO's activities because, as Mrs. Tadzong puts it: "the only certainty about the future is that it is uncertain." She has worked tirelessly, with a dedicated team of helpers, to organize training courses for local leaders, heads of families and women to teach them how to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters by planting trees to prevent soil erosion and prevent landslides; supplying and planting fire resistant plants to prevent bush fires; and introducing the practice of using compost to fertilize soil for food crop production.

Strengthening public awareness and engaging in advocacy activities is also an important component of Mrs. Tadzong's work. Plays are held in village to drive home messages such as the need to be aware of hazards, and which plants are best to prevent soil erosion. Residents are also informed of the risks they face in building their homes on slopes or close to swamps and taught to recognize natural phenomena in order to improve their disaster forecasting skills. In short, the aim is to highlight / raise awareness on environmentally-friendly practices and their importance in mitigating disaster risk.

Mrs. Tadzong hopes to use the Award money to support women's groups in order to better involve them in, among others, disaster mitigation activities, as well as to organize workshops and conferences to identify and monitor hazards and introduce mitigation prevention measures in watershed settings.

# Certificates of Distinction

## Fundación para la Prevención del Riesgo Sísmico (FUNDAPRIS), Mérida, Venezuela

*In awarding the Certificate to FUNDAPRIS, the UN Sasakawa Award Jury cited the dedication of "a group of university professors who placed their knowledge and skills at the service of less fortunate people. Their actions will serve as a model to other social actors, both in terms of their achievements, but also in the exemplary manner they worked with national government authorities."*

FUNDAPRIS is a pioneer of national and regional initiatives on school security. Active in seismic risk reduction since 1979, its reputation and contribution in promoting school security programmes in the event of natural disasters is well established in its home country, Venezuela. One of its most important achievements to date has been to convince educational authorities in Venezuela to adopt a permanent programme on preparedness in cases of earthquakes.

In recent years, FUNDAPRIS, which is largely staffed by volunteer university professors working in offices provided by the University of the Andes, has expanded its disaster-related activities to cover such issues as emergency plans for local communities (launched in 1984); evaluation and proposals for the strengthening of seismic resistant structures of hospitals, caserns for fire-fighters and schools (initiated in 1986) and microzoning of urban risks.

Many of the activities in which FUNDAPRIS has been involved have served as models of good practice for other Latin American countries. However, as financial resources are limited, the prize money from the Sasakawa Award is earmarked for two projects: one aims to protect local communities living in the vulnerable and flood-prone plains of the Chama River, and the other to modernize the equipment FUNDAPRIS uses in the course of its seismic risk reduction activities.

## Mr. Meda Gurudutt Prasad, Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts (CADME), Andhra Pradesh, India

*The Sasakawa Award Jury awarded a Certificate to Mr. Prasad in recognition of his attachment to a noble cause and personal commitment. This made it possible for him to engage communities and make it possible for him to multiply the benefits through training, teamwork and advocacy.*

Mr. Meda Gurudutt Prasad has been involved in disaster preparedness activities for the better part of his career. Previously active in a number of important Indian NGOs, notably the ACTION Association for Rural and Tribal Development in Andhra Pradesh and AWARE, CASA, and PREPARE, he is now a Disaster Manager/ Trainer with an NGO Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts (CADME).

CADME organizes a wide range of activities to reduce the socio-economic impact of disasters in 518 disaster-prone villages situated on, or close, to the Bay of Bengal. Some of the activities entail the creation of task force teams in different settings and the organisation of training courses on disaster preparedness; emergency medical care and rescue services are also envisaged following a disaster. Advocacy workshops were also arranged in 150 districts of the Indian States of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Tamil Nadu.

CADME promotes disaster reduction and mitigation by ensuring that vulnerable populations understand the links between development issues and disaster preparedness. Village dwellers are taught of the advantages of certain activities, for example the need to have food reserves; retrofit their homes to make them cyclone-resistant; be aware of warning information systems; and assess their vulnerability to hazards. CADME intends to use the award money to expand community preparedness and SPHERE training to a further group of 150 villages and launch a 'green belt' programme in coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa.

## Professor Rafi Ahmad, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica

*The Sasakawa Jury wishes to commend Professor Ahmad's commitment and devotion to promoting the study of natural hazards and advocating collective action, as was reflected in his voluntary work outside the university he works in.*

Professor Ahmad was nominated by the Jamaican Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) because of his contributions to the study of natural hazards in Jamaica and the hazard maps and scholarly articles on natural hazards that he has produced and which have assisted ODPEM in its work. His field of interests are landslide hazard research and hazard reduction. In July 2003 his expertise on landslide hazard reduction in the Caribbean was recognized and rewarded by the International Landslide Research Group with a special award.

He is currently a senior lecturer in the Department of Geology and Geography and Head of the Disaster Studies Unit at the University of the West Indies. In this capacity he has organized workshops, field trips and courses on natural hazards. These public service programmes are intended to enlighten the professional community and general public on understanding hazardous processes and recognition of physical constraints on land use which may lead towards strategies of avoidance and relatively inexpensive non-structural methods of natural hazard mitigation.

Mr. Ahmad has been instrumental in the establishment of a Unit for Disaster Studies as a public online resource of hazard information for the entire Caribbean region. He was responsible for establishing the first course of its kind on the physical environment of small island Caribbean states, which has been popular with both undergraduate students and disaster professionals. Mr. Ahmad proposes to use the award money to initiate data collection activities on natural hazards and disasters, and prepare natural hazard profiles of other islands in the West Indies.

# Certificates of Merit

## Association Prévention 2000, Paris, France

The UN Sasakawa Jury considered that Association Prévention 2000 was an encouraging initiative to educate and create awareness and understanding of disaster reduction mechanisms among children, who will play an important role in achieving a sustainable future for humankind.

Established in 1997, Association Prévention 2000 aims at raising awareness and promoting education on natural hazards, particularly - but not exclusively - among schoolchildren in France, and Nicaragua. Many of its activities revolve around disaster mitigation and exploring innovative uses of the Internet and information technology to promote the understanding and techniques of disaster reduction. The main instrument it has at its disposal is an Internet site ([www.prevention2000.org](http://www.prevention2000.org)) which has a large documentary base on natural disasters and is now considered to be one of the pre-eminent sources of French-language information on natural disasters.

Association Prévention 2000 is a key player in the education group of the French Association for Natural Disasters Reduction (AFPCN), and is a member of the jury for scholars organized every year by the French Ministry of the Environment. It also targets young people aged between 10-15 years to question their elders to determine whether any natural disasters have struck their town and to draw local hazard maps. Many large French towns such as Orleans and Tours have agreed to be official partners of this initiative. Adolescents aged 16-17 interested in pursuing a natural hazard-related project can, on request, be assigned a scientific partner nominated from French Association for Natural Disasters Reduction (AFPCN) to oversee their project.

An Ambassador Network was launched in 2001 to bring together all French schools with educational activities on disaster risk. The French Ministry of Education has recognized this pilot project, which now comprises more than a dozen schools in France, as a valuable instrument in the field of environmental action.

The award money would be used to build upon its experience in developing educational networks on natural disasters, notably in areas in which it has been unable to develop because of insufficient resource, for example educational websites in foreign languages. It would also like to develop more educational materials that will go to form an international bank of educational resources.

## Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA), Gujarat, India

The Sasakawa Jury wishes to recognize the inclusive and innovative approach adopted by GSDMA in disaster situations, in which many partners and their stakeholders, both inside and outside India, provided knowledge and resources to formulate effective policies and legislation and prepare disaster management plans.

Created in the wake of the powerful and deadly Bhuj earthquake of January 2001 in Gujarat, India, GSDMA has acquired a solid reputation in the massive reconstruction and rehabilitation work following the disaster. GDSMA faced a huge task as, in less than two minutes, the earthquake

destroyed a million homes, killed tens of thousands of people and spelled the end of livelihoods for hundred of thousands of people in the State. Public infrastructure such as public buildings, roads and bridges; schools and health facilities and factories throughout the State lay in ruins.

An early decision was taken by the appropriate local and national authorities to undertake all the necessary social and economic activities to rehabilitate housing and resettle the affected people; lay the foundations for social and economic rehabilitation; and prepare programmes and plans to mitigate disaster losses and prepare for future losses.

With the financial support of the central and state government, multilateral agencies principally the World Bank, the ADB and the European Community, a massive earthquake rehabilitation programme was launched. This consisted of a phased implementation of a policy aimed at dealing with basic human needs and the most pressing reconstruction work to a medium-term perspective in which all affected houses, public infrastructure, rural water supply and social infrastructure would be carried out and to a longer term phase where efforts would be made to reduce and manage the natural hazards faced by Gujarat.

## Dr. Jean-Pierre Massué, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France

The Sasakawa Award Jury awarded a Certificate to Mr. Massué to recognize how an efficient and committed senior official can reach beyond his official duties and work towards promoting political and institutional understanding, as well as enhanced policies and other interesting initiatives which can be beneficial to many countries and regions.

Mr. Massué is the Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe's EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement. His main responsibility is for the preparation of proposals of implementation of the intergovernmental programme of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement and the implementation of the programme decided by the Ministers of the Agreement.

Founded in 1987 under the auspices of the Council of Europe, the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement seeks to facilitate the exchange of information to enhance disaster prevention activities, and to organize aid among the state-members of the Agreement. Member states are also called on to share experiences and pursue collaborative activities on risk reduction in order to strengthen public awareness and develop the science and techniques to organize relief operations and help restore normality in the wake of a disaster.

The initial geographic coverage of the agreement has been expanded to cover 25 countries, including countries in Western and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and in North Africa (Algeria and Morocco). The EUR-OPA Major Hazard Agreement currently has 25 member countries and six member international organizations. Bi-annual meetings of Ministers responsible for emergency management meet to discuss joint measures to protect populations against natural and technological disasters. These ministerial meetings have facilitated the implementation of international resolutions, recommendations on a national level and to organise collaboration among countries for prevention and emergency response.

*For more information, please contact:*

*Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)  
Award Management: Christel Rose, Tel: + 41 22 917 27 86, E-mail: [rosec@un.org](mailto:rosec@un.org)*

[www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)

