



Sasakawa Prize Committee
c/o UNISDR,
Geneva, Switzerland

16 February 2011

Re: Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)

Dear Prize Committee,

It is my great pleasure and honour to write in support of GNDR's nomination for the 2011 Sasakawa Prize.

In his nomination letter, Professor Ian Davis provided an overview of a many of the achievements of the GNDR. For my part, I should like to emphasise the GNDR's unique and pioneering work at the interface where research, capacity building and advocacy meet.

I have studied the relationship between local knowledge and outside specialist knowledge for 45 years, since I first lived in a Tanzanian village from 1966-68. In all those years, I have never seen a more rigorous, carefully planned and executed effort to capture local voices as GNDR's Views from the Frontline (VFL) surveys 2009 and 2011. I know them both well as I am an academic advisor to the VFL process.

'Process' is the operative and critical word. In the course of preparing VFL, running and debriefing it, the GNDR has developed a process that works with Regional Coordinating Organisations and National Coordination Organisations. Through training workshops and the provision of support, local capacity is continually being built, so that local NGOs and other civil society organisations are able to provide good, solid quantitative data on disaster risk reduction. This is an investment in the long-term future, not just a one-off mobilisation for a specific survey.

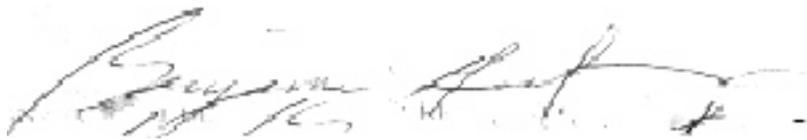
At the same time, this process has built the self confidence of civil society to take their data along to government officials and discuss the results, increasing the power of advocacy and the access that governments have to a cross section of local people's opinions and understandings of risk, hazards and vulnerability. Thus trust and

cooperation is facilitated between government and civil society – a vital pre-condition for sustainable reduction of disaster risk.

As shown by the many quotations from VFL partners interspersed in the prize application, the VFL survey process has also yielded rich qualitative narratives of the process of reducing risk at local level. Thus, quite remarkably, GNDR has married quantitative and qualitative research, capacity building and advocacy better, in my opinion, than any academic or other research or development team I have ever seen.

GNDR's achievements are multiple, timely and significant, as Ian Davis's overview shows and the documentation in the full application attests. However, even without the rest of its achievements, I believe GNDR deserves the Sasakawa Prize for the quantum leap it has made possible in the ability of civil society to do important research and to utilise that research to support the goals of the HFA.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Wisner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Ben Wisner,

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