



2002

United Nations  
Sasakawa Award for  
Disaster Reduction

*In recognition of innovative practices and  
outstanding initiatives in reducing the risks and  
vulnerabilities of communities to natural hazards*

Wednesday 9 October 2002

Award Ceremony held on the occasion of  
The International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction

UN Palais des Nations  
Geneva, Switzerland

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



International Strategy  
**ISDR**  
for Disaster Reduction

## Message from the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)

The growing number and quality of nominations for the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction clearly indicates the increasing profile of disaster reduction among the international community. Each year new and innovative initiatives are brought to the spotlight by way of the Award, providing a valuable opportunity for the sharing of experiences and best practices, as well as encouraging governments, organizations, community groups and individuals to reaffirm their commitment to and continue their engagement in reducing risk and vulnerability to natural disasters.

Given the high standard of nominations received, each year brings a greater challenge for the UN Sasakawa Jury to agree upon the Laureate and recipients of Certificates of Distinction and Merit. UN/ISDR warmly welcomes all UN Sasakawa awardees and nominees into its broad network of experts and practitioners to contribute to its mission of building disaster resilient communities, by highlighting the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development.

*Salvino Briceño*  
*Director, UN/ISDR*



# 2002

## Message from the Nippon Foundation

2002 marks the fifteenth anniversary of the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction. Over the years the Nippon Foundation has been proud to contribute to the recognition of disaster reduction efforts worldwide, continuing its close partnership with the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in promoting the global shift to a culture of prevention. While in some cases we are unable to prevent natural hazards from taking place, experience teaches us that there is much to be done to minimise their negative impacts on communities.

On behalf of the Nippon Foundation, I extend my sincere congratulations to the Laureate and Certificate recipients of the 2002 UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction.

*Shuichi Ohno*  
*Director, Department of International Affairs*  
*Nippon Foundation*

## About the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction

Together with the World Health Organization (WHO) Sasakawa Health Prize and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Sasakawa Environment Prize, the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is one of three prestigious prizes established in 1986 by founding Chairman of the Nippon Foundation, Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa.

The total approximate value of the Award is US \$50,000, shared between the Laureate and the recipients of Certificates of Distinction and Merit. In addition to the financial prize, the Laureate is presented with the valuable UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction crystal trophy.

Administered by UN/ISDR, the Laureate and Certificate recipients are agreed upon by the UN Sasakawa Jury, composed of representatives from five continents. The Award presentation ceremony takes place on the occasion of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, the second Wednesday of October.

## 2002 UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction

In 2002 the Award ceremony was held at the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, in the presence of UN/ISDR Director Mr. Sálvano Briceño, Mr. Shuichi Ohno, Director of the Nippon Foundation's Department of International Affairs, as well as Guest of Honour (representing the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva), Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The event attracted approximately forty participants comprising the UN diplomatic community (including representatives from Missions and UN agencies and organizations) in addition to representatives from the academic sector and technical institutions involved in disaster reduction. Media coverage included mention on UN Radio; articles appearing in in-house publications of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UN Development Programme and UN Volunteers Programme; and Guatemalan newspaper *Prensalibre*.

For the first time in the Award's history, the UN Sasakawa Jury decided to grant a financial reward not only to the Laureate but also to the recipients of Certificates of Distinction and Merit (US \$3,000 and US \$2,000, respectively). UN/ISDR intends to continue this tradition in the future, by making the best use of interest accrued in the endowment fund established by the Nippon Foundation.

### 2002 UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction Laureate and Certificate Recipients

#### Laureate

Prof. Dr. Sergueï Balassanian  
Armenian Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior (AASPEI), Armenia

#### Certificates of Distinction

- Mr. Muhammad Saidur Rahman  
Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre, Bangladesh
- Ms. Fernanda Teixeira  
Mozambique Red Cross (CVM), Mozambique
- Emergency Monitoring and Forecasting Agency, Russian Federation

#### Certificates of Merit

- United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV), Guatemala
- East Timor Red Cross Society (CVTL), East Timor
- Lt. Col. Abu Darwish  
Disaster Department, Jordan Civil Defence, Jordan



## Laureate

**Prof. Dr. Serguei Balassanian**  
**President, Armenian Association of Seismology and Physics of**  
**the Earth's Interior (AASPEI), Armenia**  
**Nominated by the Armenian National Survey for Seismic**  
**Protection, Armenia**

Earthquake hazard assessment and risk reduction strategy for Armenia could serve as a model throughout developing world. Strategies for seismic risk reduction in 21st century must focus more on "Preparedness and Prevention" rather than only on the "Recovery" approach

Professor Balassanian is being rewarded for his personal long-term commitment and dedication to the issue of seismic disaster risk reduction, as well as for mobilizing efforts in the scientific domain and political spheres through a strong promotion and awareness-raising initiatives on disaster reduction. All his activities in the field of disaster reduction have a systematic building up of scientific research, policy formulation and implementation at the national level, and benefit from an academic and inter-institutional collaboration of a subregional scope. Professor Balassanian is the author of the Armenian Policy in the field of seismic risk reduction (1991), founder and President of the Armenian National Survey for Seismic Protection (NSSP) as a governmental entity (1991-2001), initiated and contributed, as the leading author, to the two national programmes on Seismic Risk Reduction in Armenia and in Yerevan city adopted by the Government in 1999, author of the Armenian Seismic Protection Law adopted by the Armenian Parliament in 2002. He developed scientific research on dynamics of geophysical and geochemical processes and non linear phenomena, earthquake prediction research and early warning, seismic and environmental hazards and risks. He has led over 50 research projects funded by different international organizations.

Upon the presentation of the 2002 UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction, Prof. Dr. Balassanian emphasized the need for the international community to support disaster reduction initiatives with special consideration for developing countries, whose scarce resources and limited capacities are often unable to provide adequate community protection against disasters. He expressed his interest in the adaptation and replication of frameworks such as the designed Armenian strategy for other developing countries vulnerable to seismic hazards.

"There is a need to promote further transfers of up-to-date technology and scientific knowledge, as well as the development of multi-sectoral and pluri-disciplinary partnerships in this domain," Prof. Dr. Balassanian said. "We should promote the understanding that Earthquake Hazard Assessment and Risk Reduction are the essential elements of government policy and are intimately linked to the ability of the country to function appropriately for the guarantee of business continuity and hence economic growth and potential of any country to prosper and develop".

AASPEI is a non-governmental independent organization comprising specialists in seismology, geophysics and geology as well as specialists in seismic protection and related fields, and operates according to the Constitution and legislation of the Republic of Armenia, international contracts and other regulations. The Association operates on the principles of publicity, legality, equality of rights, self-finance and self-government.

*For further information, please refer to [aaspe.topcities.com](http://aaspe.topcities.com)  
or email [Sbal@themail.com](mailto:Sbal@themail.com) or [AASPEI@themail.com](mailto:AASPEI@themail.com)*

## Certificate of Distinction

**Mr. Muhammad Saidur Rahman**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC), Bangladesh**

Nominated by the UN Resident Coordinator, Bangladesh

*Certificate accepted by Mr. Kazi Imtiaz Hossain, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN, Geneva on behalf of Mr. Muhammad Saidur Rahman*

Innovation in leading and mobilising disaster reduction in Bangladesh



Mr. Rahman holds wide and extensive experience in advocacy and awareness-raising in the field of disaster reduction. He is recognised by many for his ability to develop innovative initiatives under

tight financial constraints, as well as his exceptional ability to inspire and motivate volunteers to action in the reduction of vulnerabilities to the highly flood-prone Bangladesh. "I aim to change the mind-set of policy makers and also empower people in pre-disaster preparedness as Bangladesh is excellent in post-disaster management," Mr. Rahman said. "We only need to spend one dollar for a family in pre-disaster preparedness programmes instead of seeking millions of dollars to help the victims after a disaster strikes."

Mr. Rahman participated in the study and development of a flood preparedness programme incorporated in the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme of Bangladesh, as well as producing numerous information materials for reducing the socio-economic impact of disasters contributing towards the achievement of sustainable development in his country.

His commitment to promoting the integration of disaster management in development planning includes the coordination of national level seminars and workshops targeted at policy-makers, senior civil servants, disaster managers and the media. He was also recently recommended by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to speak at the Wilton Park Conference on Disaster Preparedness to an audience comprising donor government officials.

*For further information, please email [sadique\\_rahman@hotmail.com](mailto:sadique_rahman@hotmail.com)*

## Certificate of Distinction

**Ms. Fernanda Texeira**

**Secretary-General**

**Mozambique Red Cross (CVM), Mozambique**

Nominated by the UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Food Programme (WFP), Mozambique

*Certificate accepted by Mr. Richard Hundele, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Geneva on behalf of Ms. Fernanda Texeira*

Practice improves preparedness in Mozambique

Following the war (1980s) and severe drought in Mozambique as a result of the 1992 El Niño event, the Mozambique Red Cross committed to strengthening national strategic disaster management planning by supporting local capacity through volunteer training, the clear definition of a legal framework on disaster reduction as well as the development of an accessible information system. The empowerment of local communities was facilitated by placing emphasis on the importance of respecting local traditions, as well as involving community members through participatory consultation in information collection and the drafting of risk and vulnerability maps. This approach resulted in improved community awareness and preparedness for subsequent years of flooding in Mozambique, in turn leading to reduced overall losses.

Ms. Fernanda Texeira's personal commitment to mobilising action towards community-based disaster preparedness projects led to significant improvements of local communities' prevention and response to disasters. Ms. Texeira graciously accepted Certificate of Distinction, stating: "...I consider it to be a distinction for the organization to which I belong, because without the abnegated work of all my colleagues of the Mozambique Red Cross and without the effort and dedication of thousands of volunteers, I would not have been successful in fulfilling the mission to which I am committed...I would like to dedicate this distinction to the Mozambique people for their strength and courage and to all the people all over the world for their solidarity actions that are the irrefutable proof that a more human and safe world for all is possible."

*For further information, please refer to [www.redcross.org.mz](http://www.redcross.org.mz) or email [cvm@tropical.co.mz](mailto:cvm@tropical.co.mz)*



## Certificate of Distinction Emergency Monitoring and Forecasting Agency, EMERCOM, Russian Federation

Nominated by the Permanent Mission of the  
Russian Federation, Geneva

*Certificate accepted by Mr. Alexander Bavykin, Acting  
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, Geneva,  
on behalf of the Emergency Monitoring and Forecasting Agency*

Earthquake mitigation geoinformation system:  
EXTREMUM



The Emergency Monitoring and Forecasting Agency of the Russian Civil Defense and Disaster Management Research Institute was founded in 1992 by decree of the Russian Government as a leading organization of the

Russian Federation in disaster management. Its main fields of activity include emergency monitoring and forecasting, the development of the joint Russian State System of Disaster Management (RSSDM) as part of the national security system, the organization and coordination of information collection and exchange, and emergency response training of students and specialists.

The Emergency Monitoring and Forecasting Agency proposed and implemented a new and innovative approach to earthquake mitigation through the global geographic information system 'EXTREMUM', which develops risk maps, emergency response planning, forecasts earthquakes and evaluates possible secondary consequences of such hazards (for example, radiological, chemical and technological disasters as well as mud flows) in the context of reducing human losses. Many experts and practitioners in the field of disaster reduction applaud the highly comprehensive scientific research and innovative use of technologies involved in the development of the EXTREMUM system.

*For further information, please refer to [www.ampe.ru](http://www.ampe.ru)  
or email [director@ampe.mtu-net.ru](mailto:director@ampe.mtu-net.ru)*

## Certificate of Merit UN Volunteers Programme (UNV), Guatemala

Nominated by the UN Resident Coordinator, Guatemala  
*Certificate accepted by Mr. Francisco Alejandro Salazar-Merck,  
United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV), Guatemala*

Community cooperation following Hurricane Mitch

Guatemala is particularly prone to natural disasters such as severe flooding, hurricanes and earthquakes. After the onset of Hurricane Mitch (2000), lessons were learned following significant social, cultural and economic losses in the country. Together with the Universidad San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC), the UN Volunteers Programme in Guatemala was recognised for the highly successful tripartite collaboration (UNV/USAC/local community) in the implementation of the project Risk Prevention and Disaster Management in 2000-2002.

The project promoted strong community involvement towards reversing environmental degradation trends and the resulting increase in poverty throughout Guatemala, while seeking to minimise the human and physical costs of natural disasters. By recruiting graduate volunteers from USAC, UNV supervised the overall project, which assisted in capacity building in disaster management of local communities across three municipalities in Guatemala.

"I am here in the name of the UN Volunteers working since November 2000 on disaster management in Guatemala, a country stricken by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides and droughts," said Francisco Alejandro Salazar Merck after receiving the certificate. "For people who are on the edge of survival, the loss that a disaster can also be the end of their hopes. We are aware of the problems that face our country, and we pass along the tools needed for local empowerment."



*For further information, please refer to  
[www.onu.org.gt/paginas/agencias/vnu/vnuprin.html](http://www.onu.org.gt/paginas/agencias/vnu/vnuprin.html)  
or email [cesar.guides@unvolunteers.org](mailto:cesar.guides@unvolunteers.org) or  
[roger.brandin@undp.org](mailto:roger.brandin@undp.org)*

## Certificate of Merit East Timor Red Cross Society (CVTL), East Timor

Nominated by the World Health Organization (WHO),  
East Timor

*Certificate accepted by Mr. Francisco Gusmão Dias Ximenes,  
Secretary-General, East Timor Red Cross Society (CVTL)*

Disaster preparedness takes priority for the  
world's newest nation



The East Timor Red Cross Society (CVTL) was formed in 2000 to target four core areas of activities: health, disaster preparedness, disaster response and humanitarian values. In conjunction with a number of Red Cross development partners,

CVTL has made notable achievements in the field of disaster preparedness and response, including advocacy to donor governments and international organizations, as well as the promotion of communities' capacities to cope with the effects of disasters despite the country's complex political environment.

"The Red Cross did exemplary work under difficult conditions in the emergency and reconstruction activities during the post-UNTAET period in the former East Timor," said the Director-General of CVTL's nominator, the World Health Organization, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland. "This honour is well deserved and I support and congratulate the Red Cross on their good work," she added.

For the CVTL, passing on first aid skills is a priority. "First aid assistance is a fundamental part of disaster reduction, because it's about saving lives," Mr. Ximenes said upon receiving the Certificate of Merit. As part of this, the CVTL is currently engaged in training the army and police force in first aid. Such skills are crucial, given the likelihood of natural disasters striking East Timor. "Each year, cyclones hit the south and west of the country, and often they can destroy up to 1,000 houses. Landslides and floods are common in the south and east - and they can destroy rice fields and homes. The north is often affected by drought," Ximenes said.

*For further information, please refer to  
[www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_profile.pl?tpprofile.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_profile.pl?tpprofile.pdf)*

## Certificate of Merit Lt. Col. Abu Darwish Director, Disaster Department, Jordan Civil Defence, Jordan

Nominated by the UN Resident Coordinator, Jordan  
*Certificate accepted by Ms. Saja Majali, Second Secretary,  
Permanent Mission of Jordan to the UN, Geneva, on behalf of  
Lt. Colonel Abu Darwish*

Capacity-building for communities

Lt. Col. Abu Darwish was recognised for his personal commitment to the promotion of disaster reduction through valuable awareness-raising initiatives programmes such as the organization of seminars, cooperation activities with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Arab countries and conducting disaster-related studies and training programmes.

He played a key role in developing national plans on disasters for various countries, and has a keen interest in the roles of

volunteers in disaster reduction, which manifested in the production of a train-the-trainer manual targeted at IFRC delegates working in the field. His dedication to capacity building at the



community level is clearly demonstrated throughout his career, with his efforts appreciated and benefiting many communities.

*For more information, please visit  
[www.icdo.org/National%20structures/Jordan.pdf](http://www.icdo.org/National%20structures/Jordan.pdf)  
or contact [CIVILD@nic.net.jo](mailto:CIVILD@nic.net.jo)*

## Former Laureates of the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction

<b>2001</b>	Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), Germany	<b>1995</b>	No Laureate
<b>2000</b>	Fondo para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo Social del Eje Cafetero (FOREC), Colombia	<b>1994</b>	National Emergency Commission, Costa Rica
<b>1999</b>	Prof. Mustafa Erdik, Turkey	<b>1993</b>	Dr. Vit Karnik, Czech Republic
<b>1998</b>	H.E. Mr. Ji Cai Rang, China, Prof. Wang Ang-Sheng, China	<b>1992</b>	Geophysical Institute of the National Polytechnic School, Ecuador
<b>1997</b>	Observatorio Sismológico del Sur-Occidente (OSSO), Colombia Dr. A.S. Arya, India	<b>1991</b>	Mr. Franco Barberi, Italy
<b>1996</b>	Dr. Ian Davis, United Kingdom	<b>1990</b>	Mr. Julio Kuroiwa, Peru
		<b>1989</b>	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Ethiopia
		<b>1988</b>	ESCAP/Typhoon Committee, Philippines
		<b>1987</b>	Ratu Kamisese Mara, Fiji

## About the United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)

Recognising that natural hazards can threaten any one of us, the ISDR builds on partnerships and takes a global approach to disaster reduction, seeking to involve every individual and every community towards the goals of reducing the loss of lives, the socio-economic setbacks and the environmental damages caused by natural hazards. In order to achieve these goals, the ISDR promotes four objectives as tools towards reaching disaster reduction for all:

- Increase public awareness to understand risk, vulnerability and disaster reduction globally
- Obtain commitment from public authorities to implement disaster reduction policies and actions
- Stimulate interdisciplinary and intersectoral partnerships, including the expansion of risk reduction networks
- Improve scientific knowledge about disaster reduction

The ISDR combines the strengths of many key players through the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) and the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the ISDR (UN/ISDR).

The IATF/DR is the principal body for the development of disaster reduction policy. It is headed by the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and consists of 25 UN, international, regional and civil society organizations. It meets twice a year in Geneva, Switzerland. Working Groups reporting to the IATF/DR bring together specialists and organisations to discuss issues of common and global relevance to disaster reduction such as climate variability, early warning, vulnerability and risk analysis, wildland fires and drought.

The UN/ISDR is the focal point in the UN System to promote links and synergies between, and the coordination of, disaster reduction activities in the socio-economic, humanitarian and development fields, as well as to support policy integration. It serves as an international information clearinghouse on disaster reduction, developing awareness campaigns and producing articles, journals, and other publications and promotional materials related to disaster reduction. The UN/ISDR headquarters is based at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It conducts outreach programmes through its regional units in Costa Rica and Kenya.

*For more information, please visit [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)*

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## About the Nippon Foundation

The Nippon Foundation is an independent, non-profit grant-making organization that was established as the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation in 1962 by legislation setting aside 3.3 percent of the revenues from motor boat racing to be used for philanthropic purposes. It originally focused on providing aid to maritime affairs, and then extended its target area to public welfare and voluntary programs, as well as overseas cooperation assistance. The objectives of these activities are to alleviate human suffering, to advance human welfare and to promote world peace, without any bias to policy, ideology, religion or race. The Nippon Foundation's annual spending in the year 2002, not including indirect costs, amounts approximately to US\$ 368 million, of which US\$ 52 million was spent for overseas cooperation assistance. The Foundation's principal commitment is to support international humanitarian initiatives aimed at improving the social, cultural and economic well being of developing countries, and combating poverty worldwide.

*For more information, please visit [www.nippon-foundation.or.jp](http://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp)*