



PRESS RELEASE

UN/ISDR 2005/25
Friday 23 September 2005

2005 UN Sasakawa Award Recognises Regional Efforts in Disaster Reduction

The UN Sasakawa Award Jury named Mr. Chimeddorj Batchulluun of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in the Government of Mongolia as the 2005 Laureate for his efforts in raising awareness about the impact of the Dzud on pastoral livestock.

The dzud, a Mongolian term for “white death”, refers to a winter condition that destroys or limits access to grazing stuff, preventing animals from eating and thus from surviving during the winter months from October to May. Conditions that lead to dzud include heavy snowfall (white dzud), the formation of an impenetrable ice layer over pastures (ice dzud), or the lack of sufficient winter fodder for animals following summer drought (black dzud). More than 8.5 million or 25% of the Mongolian herd have perished as a result of dzud conditions between 1999 and 2003.

Mr. Chimeddorj Batchulluun provided a model for effective risk reduction combining traditional and cultural values with modern technical capabilities to increase the resilience of herding communities in Mongolia.

“The Award provides a unique opportunity to share experiences and highlight good practice in disaster reduction, and to promote global commitment to reducing risk and vulnerability to disasters” says Sálvano Briceño, Director of the inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) that administers the Award.

Two certificates of Distinction were also awarded to Mr. Claude de Ville de Goyet, former Director of the Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief Coordination Programme in the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) and to Mr. Jaime Parejo Garcia, Chief of the Rescue Dog Unit at the Fire Brigade in Sevilla, Spain.

Claude de Ville de Goyet received the Certificate of Distinction for his valuable efforts to minimize the number of victims and material losses in hospitals before natural hazards strike.

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Jaime Parejo Garcia developed an innovative method that improves the efficiency of dog rescue in the searching of survivors buried during natural hazards. His system has been extensively promoted through fire fighters and community volunteers in many countries in Latin American, the Caribbean and in Europe.

A Certificate of Merit was awarded to the Simeulue Community, in Indonesia, that suffered a strong earthquake in 1907. Since then, the local government has undertaken regular and diverse activities to maintain its community aware of potential disasters and to sustain an acute degree of awareness and preparedness. This approach led to saving thousands of lives during the Indian Ocean tsunami on 26 December 2004. Of the 83,000 Simeulue population, only 7 inhabitants lost their lives to the tsunami.

“Although we received fewer nominations this year, the quality of the candidates was surprising high, demonstrating that more regional initiatives are taking place. This is encouraging: the involvement of communities is decisive if we want to reduce the impact of natural hazards on populations ” said Salvano Briceño.

Mr. Chimeddorj Batchulluun is the eighteenth laureate of the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction. He will receive the crystal trophy and \$40,000 during a ceremony that will take place on 12 October at the new ISDR office in Bangkok, Thailand.

Together with the WHO Sasakawa Health Prize and the UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize, the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is one of three prestigious prizes established in 1986 by the Nippon Foundation in Japan. The UN Sasakawa Jury, which designates the laureates, is composed of representatives from the five continents.

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