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### INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION Thailand will host the Sasakawa ceremony

On the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, Mr. Kim Hak Su, Executive Secretary of UN/ESCAP, will present The Sasakawa Award on behalf of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to Mr. Chimeddorj Batchulluun of the National Emergency Management Agency of Mongolia (NEMA).

The ceremony is taking place today in Bangkok, Thailand at the UN/ESCAP premises.

Two Certificates of Distinction will be also be awarded to Mr. Claude de Ville de Goyet, Belgium, former Director of the Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief Coordination Programme of the Pan American Health Organization and to Mr. Jaime Parejo Garcia, Fire Chief from Sevilla, Spain. A Certificate of Merit will be awarded to the Simeulue Community Group in Indonesia.

“ We are very pleased to award those prizes in Thailand, a country which has suffered so much from the 26 December 2004 tsunami. The Sasakawa laureates are good examples of dedication that greatly contribute to advancing the cause of reducing the impact of disasters”, says Salvano Briceño, Director of the ISDR secretariat. “We need to support all disaster reduction initiatives if we want to achieve the main goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action which are to build resilience of nations and communities to disasters by 2015.”

To mark the UN International Year of Micro credit, the secretariat of ISDR also plans to launch activities worldwide to generate a debate on how micro finance can be a potential tool to reduce the impact of disasters.

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and more recently Hurricane Katrina in the United States have once again shown that the poor are always the most vulnerable to the impact of natural hazards,

“ Micro credit combined with micro insurance is a solution to improve the income of people but it is not yet fully utilized as a tool to reduce the impact of disasters, which needs to be further explored. We need to invest in disaster risk reduction to reduce the vulnerability of people to hazards and to break the vicious cycle of poverty” says Salvano Briceño.



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A number of round tables and discussions will be held in India, Tajikistan and Switzerland to see how micro finance products can alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable populations.

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