



PRESS RELEASE

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Indonesian scientist Eko Teguh Paripurno wins 2009 UN Sasakawa Award for his outstanding achievements in disaster reduction

16 June 2009- The 2009 laureate for the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is geologist Dr Eko Teguh Paripurno. He receives the award - valued at US\$ 50,000 - for his lifetime contribution and his outstanding commitment to reduce disaster risk and building capacity at the community level in Indonesia, one of the countries most vulnerable to multiple hazards.

Additionally, five organizations actively involved in disaster reduction are awarded Certificates (two Certificates of Distinction, three Certificates of Merit). The UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is together with the WHO Sasakawa Health Prize and the UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize one of three prestigious prizes established by the Nippon Foundation in Japan in 1986.

"Disaster risk reduction begins with learning, which is basically building the trust that everyone can play a significant role in collective risk reduction efforts" says Dr Paripurno. "I am planning to make use of the award money to promote learning in a number of areas prone to volcanic eruptions as well as to initiate a community centre for learning in disaster risk reduction" continues the laureate.

Dr Paripurno is the Director of the Research Center for Disaster Management of the University of National Development in Yogyakarta and consultant to local and national governments as well as to various civil society organizations. Examples of his work include a deep involvement in actions taken in the aftermath of the Yogyakarta earthquake of 2006, which killed nearly 6000 people. Dr Paripurno has worked in the field of community based disaster risk management in Indonesia for more than fifteen years, often related to volcanic eruptions. He has contributed directly to capacity building through his involvement in more than 750 local disaster risk management projects in 20 provinces in Indonesia and has indirectly reached thousands of people in Indonesia.

The Certificates of Distinction go to the French Non-Governmental Organization Development Workshop France (DWF) and to Jeunesse en Mission Entraide et Developpement (JEMED) based in Niger. The former specialize in safer building techniques and the awareness raising thereof, such as the strengthening of school buildings. The latter assist drought-stricken communities in Northern Niger to maintain a sustainable livelihood. Their initiatives reach from providing water resources by digging wells, via cereal and animal fodder banks to health and nutrition education.

The recipients of the three Sasakawa Certificates of Merit were the Tehran Disaster and Mitigation Management Organization (TDMMO) in Iran, Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS) in Pakistan and the International Research Centre on El Nino (CIIFEN), Ecuador.

Although working in different contexts, ranging from training for disaster responses after earthquakes to the building and implementation of information systems for climate hazards, all award winners significantly contributed to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, the globally adopted plan to advance Disaster Risk Reduction.

"Dr Paripurno and the other awardees have made a difference in reducing disaster risk by building a strong knowledge base and resilience amongst highly vulnerable communities", states Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction Margareta Wahlström. "This award recognizes their outstanding achievements and aims to encourage them and their peers to continue and further intensify their indispensable activities".

Notes to the editors:

The Sasakawa Award Ceremony was held on 16 June during the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 15-19 June 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. Administered by UNISDR, the Laureate and Certificate recipients are agreed upon by the UN Sasakawa Jury, comprising representatives from five continents. The Award is presented biennially at the Global Platform.

For more information about the Sasakawa Award including the laureate's achievements and a transcript of the interview with Dr Paripurno, please go to <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/sasakawa/sasakawa09-list.html>