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Personal Reference in Support of Allan Lavell for the:

2015 United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction

It is my distinct pleasure to support the candidature of Allan Lavell for the prestigious Sasakawa Award for 2015.

I first met Dr Lavell at a conference in Mérida (Venezuela) in 1996. He immediately impressed me with his articulate skills in English and in Spanish in putting over his innovative ideas on the reduction of risk from natural hazards. Since that time I have had the privilege of witnessing the development of his ideas and his unique approach to the subject. That approach is a seamless combination of multi-disciplinary, holistic, multinational and bridging the gap between the academic and the practical implementation of theories.

I was particularly impressed with his substantial document about the retrofitting of a hospital in Costa Rica where he examined the decision-making processes and the interaction of the administrative functioning of the facility with the engineering and construction actions. In order to achieve the desired result Dr Lavell had to acquire and internalise a sufficient understanding of the several disciplines which are necessarily involved in such a project.

As a member of the 5-person Scientific Planning Group on Natural Disasters of the International Council for Science (regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean) in 2007-8 Dr Lavell was our principal mouthpiece. He often led the discussions of our group and his fertile mind contributed several of the ideas which the group embraced and developed.

Allan Lavell would be a worthy recipient of the Sasakawa Award and I have no hesitation in adding my name to his supporters.

Tony Gibbs
Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering
2007 Sasakawa Award recipient