THE GREEN STAR AWARDS 2013

OCHA GREEN CROSS UNEP

2013 GREEN STAR AWARDS Ceremony

For Excellence in Preventing, Preparing for, and Responding to Environmental Emergencies

CICG, Geneva, Switzerland
2 September 2013

Welcome to the 2013 Green Star Awards ceremony!

The biennial Green Star Awards, first presented in 2009, are a collaborative initiative between Green Cross International (GCI), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The purpose of the Green Star Awards is to recognize individuals, organizations, governments and companies, who demonstrate outstanding achievements in prevention and preparedness for environmental emergencies, and response to environmental emergency situations.

Environmental emergencies are sudden-onset disasters or accidents resulting from natural, technological or human-induced factors, or a combination of these that cause or threaten to cause severe environmental damage as well as loss of human lives and livelihoods. Addressing them is vital to ensuring an effective humanitarian response to disasters, and to preserving human health and the environment.

This year, six winners have been selected for their remarkable contributions to the field of environmental emergencies.

The 2013 Awards ceremony is being held in conjunction with Green Cross International's 20th anniversary.

The Selection Process

A Green Star Awards Steering Committee comprising representatives of GCI, OCHA and UNEP was responsible for overseeing the nomination and selection of awards recipient.

The final selection of awardees was endorsed by the following panel:

Alexander Likhotal
President

Rashid Khalikov
Director,
OCHA Geneva

Represented by

Wendy Cue
Chief of Section

Categories

This year, three categories of nominees following a thematic approach were taken into consideration:

1. Prevention and Preparedness

The efforts to increase awareness of communities, disaster responders, governments and industries on the impacts of environmental emergencies, and improve preparedness to future disasters by building capacity at various levels.

2. Response

The efforts to ensure that capacity to respond to environmental emergencies is always being improved, and that those capable of helping to build such capacity do so.

3. Mainstreaming

Attention to environmental issues as part of a holistic response effort, by ensuring that environmental considerations are integrated in the humanitarian programme cycle: including strategy development, contingency planning, resource mobilization, performance monitoring and evaluation.

More information can be found on: *greenstarawards.net*

The 2013 Awardees

Preparedness

- **Kenya Red Cross Society**, *for its efforts in disaster risk reduction and especially for its work during the Sinai Nairobi industrial accident in September 2011.*

- **Joint nomination: Prof Nikola Nikolov, Sundar Prasad Sharma, Prof. Sergiy Zibtsev**, *for their work on the humanitarian and environmental impacts on wildfires.*

Response

- **New York City Hurricane Sandy Debris Removal Task Force**, *for their response to Superstorm Sandy in 2012.*

- **Mayor Masahide Matsumoto,** *for his response to the Fukushima crisis in 2011.*

Mainstreaming

- **WWF/ American Red Cross**, *for their partnership on the GRRT Toolkit.*

Special Lifetime Award

- **David Attenborough**, *for his 60 years' dedication to environment and for his work on climate change and environmental emergencies.*

Kenya Red Cross Society

On 12 September 2011, the Kenya Red Cross Society responded to an explosion at an oil pipeline in Nairobi's Sinai Lunga Lunga informal settlement. The blast killed 82 people who had been scooping oil from the pipeline.

"We have been fetching oil from these sewer opening using sponges but today, oh my God was just too much," cried one mother who lost her two children during the ensuing inferno.

An additional 106 people were rushed to the hospital suffering from burns and injuries arising from the stampede that followed as people ran for safety. The incident eventually claimed 121 lives and left 137 families homeless.

Disaster response teams and E-Plus ambulances from the Kenya Red Cross Society immediately swung into action, evacuating the injured to nearby hospitals. As the main organization entrusted by the Government of Kenya to respond to emergencies, the Kenya Red Cross Society coordinated responses from other organizations to ensure there were not any gaps or duplication of services. Staff and volunteers set up tents for registration, re-united missing

family members and provided vital psychosocial support for those who survived.

More than 530 people were registered by the Kenya Red Cross Society as in need of assistance. Staff and volunteers helped distribute food and non-food items to those most vulnerable.

To prevent a similar crisis from occurring in the future, the Kenya Red Cross Society implemented an Urban Disaster Risk Reduction Programme in seven informal settlements in Nairobi. Through this programme, volunteers and staff at the Red Cross visit settlements and children's clubs, explaining the various hazards that exist and working with residents to find ways of mitigating those risks.

Joint Nomination: Professor Nikola Nikolov,

Sundar Prasad Sharma, Professor Sergiy Zibtsev

Nikola Nikolov

Nikola Nikolov, of Macedonia, founded the Faculty of Forestry in Skopje and is also is a Professor there. He also leads the Regional Fire Monitoring Center (RFMC). He is an expert in the field of forest protection, especially forest fire protection. For almost 25 years of domestic and international work, he has had an opportunity to experience and analyse local- and region-specific situations in terms of forest fires. He realized that local and regional preparedness to forest fire related problems, thus saving the natural environment, are a prerequisite to improving problem solving mechanisms. After deploying for several fire assessment missions in the Caucasus region and some Balkan countries, he recognized a severe problem for fire management where terrains were contaminated with land mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). In cooperation with the Global Fire Monitoring Centre (GFMC) and partners in Ukraine, in the frame of the activities of the Regional Southeast Europe/Caucasus Wildland Fire Network (which he is coordinating), he organized a regional meeting in Skopje (2008) and an Advanced Seminar, “Wildfires and Human Security Fire Management on Terrain Contaminated by Radioactivity, Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and Land Mines in Kyiv” (2009).

The fire season in 2007 was one of the most severe seasons he experienced in the Balkan region in terms of land devastated by wildfires and human fatalities; most of the victims were civilians. In order to increase the preparedness of the local population (in the rural regions especially), he cooperates with GFMC, the Ukraine-based Regional Eastern European Fire Monitoring Centre and partners from Greece in the preparation of Guidelines for Rural Populations, Local Community and Municipality Leaders in the Balkan Region for the Defense of Human and Rural Assets Against Wildfires. As the President of the Fire Protection Union of Macedonia – a national organization of volunteers- he has been contributing his expertise for the guidelines. The overall aim of this work is to encourage civil society to take responsibility in wildfire prevention and preparedness.

Sundar Prasad Sharma

Sundar Prasad Sharma, of Nepal, is a forestry professional who began his career as a soil conservation officer to look at the impacts of fire on ecosystem and soil stability. Notably, he focused on secondary disasters after wildfires which, especially in mountain terrains, are often result in more severe disasters than the fire damage itself (e.g. soil erosion, floods, landslides, mudslides and rockfalls). While he considered fire management as a key issue in sustainable forest management, he looked at both the negative impacts in fire-sensitive ecosystems as well as the benign role of fire in fire-maintained or fire-tolerant ecosystems, for example, surface fires resulting from fuel and wildfire hazard reduction, wildlife habitat improvement or selection of ecologically and economically valuable species. Keeping in mind that most fire in the South Asia region are caused by humans and are affecting primarily rural populations and their properties, the research and outreach work of Sundar Sharma focused on developing concepts and guidelines to promote participatory resource conservation (e.g. how local community can be involved).

He developed a 3-level fire management strategy (community, district and national levels) that focuses on empowering local communities on wildfire prevention, most suitable in least developed country like Nepal; effectually building capacity and raising awareness among communities. Some model fire

management volunteer groups have already been developed in Nepal. Concurrently, he has worked to implement prevention and preparedness measures into district (province) level fire administrations and national level policy intervention for wildfire emergencies.

In practice, he is the spiritus rector in founding the UNISDR-Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network and networking among scientists, fire managers and academia in countries of the South Asian region. He has been advocating for the institutionalization of wildland fire management in respective governments, catalyzing them towards development of fire management policies. For example, the government of Nepal has approved the Forest Fire Management Strategy 2010 which is currently in the process of implementation.

Sergiy Zibtsev

During the last 20 years of his professional career Sergiy Zibtsev, professor at the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, devoted his efforts for preventing wildfires of catastrophic dimensions in forests contaminated by radioactivity, as a consequence of the failure of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986. He assessed the effects of a worst-case scenario of a wildfire burning in contaminated terrain and mobilized political awareness to take appropriate action. Scientific studies carried out by an international group of prominent scientists, coordinated by Dr. Sergiy Zibtsev, proved that a high radioactive wildfire hazard exists in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. The hazard is increasing and representing a threat by radioactive emissions to the security, and especially the food supply, of people in the Ukraine and Eastern European region. Abovementioned joint international efforts on rising awareness allowed him to develop a mitigation plan, get technical support and receive national and international funding for the prevention and preparedness of a possible environmental and humanitarian catastrophe. Currently, Dr. Zibtsev is working with GEF/UNEP to launch a project aimed at improving wildfire management capacities in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

As the Chernobyl wildfire hazard has reached a regional scale and requires extended international cross-border co-operation,

the Regional Eastern European Fire Monitoring Centre (REEFMC), was established in 2013 at the National University. The REEFMC serves as a center of excellence in wildland fire research, developing a regional network for distribution of information on concepts of integrated fire management. The REEFMC is working at the interface of science and the user communities, particularly by serving national agencies in Ukraine and neighbouring Eastern European countries with data and information, capacity building (training), advisory services for developing fire management policies and enhancing local and national fire management capabilities. The centre is a facilitator of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Regional Eurasia Wildland Fire Network and thus serving the Global Wildland Fire Network, a global coalition of dedicated institutions and individuals serving the UNISDR system as a Thematic Platform and advisory body.

New York City Hurricane Sandy Debris Removal Task Force

Debris: One of the most immediately visible signs of a disastrous storm; its removal, an early sign that recovery is possible and has begun.

New York City's Hurricane Sandy Debris Removal Task Force (DRTF), comprised of 25 federal state and local agencies including FEMA, the US Corps of Engineers, the USEPA, NY State's Department of Environmental Conservation and NYC's Departments of Sanitation and Parks and its Office of Emergency Management, was charged with the coordination, removal and final disposal of the over two million cubic yards of debris of all imaginable types generated by that October 2012 storm. As NYC does not have a municipal landfill, and open space for staging debris is severely limited, and as the Bloomberg administration stresses environmentally sustainable problem solving, reusing and recycling debris was mandated and immediately made a priority. Through twice daily meetings, chaired by the Mayor's Incident Commander and attended by up to 65 action agency representatives, the DRTF developed and successfully implemented innovative, environmentally and fiscally sustainable, multi-faceted strategies to conserve natural resources, reduce long-distance trucking and minimize final disposal in distant landfills.

Sand: 187,000 cubic yards of sand, displaced onto streets and parks by wind and water, was collected for return to the beach, saving taxpayers over $80,000,000 from forgone transportation and dump fees and from obviated sand replacement costs.

Boardwalk: More than three miles of Rockaways and Coney Island Beach Boardwalk, constructed years ago from tropical rainforest woods, were picked up by the storm and disastrously relocated. Over 144,000 square feet of 2x4 decking and 55,000 lineal feet of 4x12 supporting timbers were salvaged -- used to repair slightly damaged Boardwalk and construct new public beach structures.

Vegetative Debris: Of Sandy-generated 200,000+ cy of destroyed vegetation (more than 20,000 trees downed), almost 145,000 cy was chipped for use in landscaping.

Wetlands: Novel methods were employed to remove whole houses, their scattered contents and vehicles swept into wetlands – decreasing the likelihood of toxic summer fires and assuring recovery of important ecosystems.

Household Hazardous Wastes and E-goods: More than 110,000 containers containing a wide variety of HHWs were recovered and, as with e-goods, properly disposed of.

Concrete: 5,000 cy of concrete were crushed for reuse.

White Goods and Metal: Well over 1200 tons were collected for recycling.

Masahide Matsumoto

Katsurao village was a quiet and peaceful small village in mountainous terrain, located 25 km from the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan. The situation was drastically changed after the 3.11 earth quake/tsunami hit for the village mayor, Mr. Matsumoto, and all of the villagers there.

He had all the villagers evacuate immediately to a safer place, far from the Fukushima nuclear power plant on 14 March, 2011, only two days after the first explosion of the No.1 reactor and one day after the second explosion of No.3 reactor. Consequently, Mayor Matsumoto saved 1,600 villagers from high level radioactive contamination.

After the first explosion on 12 March, he tried to collect information on the potential impact of the disaster from the government and prefecture office but could not get any guidance or instruction due to chaotic situation of the administration. The only source of information he was able to make use of was TV news, which

only reported that the emergent evacuation zone expanded to a 20km radius from the power plant. He decided to prepare for the worst on 13 March by arranging 5 buses and 15 drivers for the 150 people who had no transportation measures.

On 14 March, after the second explosion, he instructed the village's people to evacuate immediately, based on various unofficial information gathered from villagers and acquaintances. He determined to take all the responsibility, whatever the consequences, of the operation; the evacuation started at 22:45.

On the morning of 15 March, and following the evacuation, No.2 and No.4 reactors exploded which released a thick radioactive plume that covered the entire village. His clever and brave decision saved the lives of 1,600 village people.

Now the village office has been moved to a temporary office in Miharumachi, about 50km radius from the power plant and the whole population has scattered in various temporary housings for refugees. Katsurao village, after two and half years, still remains uninhabitable due to radioactive contamination.

WWF/ American Red Cross

In the aftermath of the tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean in December 2004, the American Red Cross and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) formed an innovative, five-year partnership to help survivors rebuild their communities as well as the natural environments on which they depend. By combining the humanitarian expertise of the American Red Cross with the environmental expertise of WWF, the partnership worked to ensure a long-lasting recovery by restoring livelihoods, protecting natural resources, and strengthening communities against future disasters.

The world's leading conservation organization, WWF works in 100 countries supported by close to 5 million members globally. WWF's unique way of working combines global reach with a foundation in science, to deliver innovative solutions that meet the needs of both people and nature. The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. Working with global Red Cross and Red Crescent partners, the American Red Cross helped 155 million people in 70 countries around the world in the last year.

The tremendous amount of learning between these organizations led to new ways of doing business and the production of a toolkit—the Green Recovery and Reconstruction: Training Toolkit for Humanitarian Aid (GRRT) that captured these innovative approaches. The GRRT was developed with input by experts from CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, Mercy Corps, RedR, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and United Nations Environment Programme among others. The GRRT consists of 10 training modules covering topics such as environmental assessments, shelter site selection, building materials, livelihood development and disaster risk reduction.

The toolkit has been shared with more than 500 individuals and organizations since its launch in 2010 and GRRT training has been applied to the 2010 Chile earthquake and tsunami, the 2010 Pakistan floods, and the 2011 Thailand floods.

WWF and the American Red Cross continue working to minimize environmental degradation and improve resiliency in their earthquake recovery and reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

SPECIAL LIFETIME AWARD

David Attenborough

For more than 60 years Sir David Attenborough has devoted himself to informing humanity about the beauty and fragility of the natural world. His countless stunning series and programmes, produced by the BBC, have inspired and educated three generations or more, opening a window onto the world that would otherwise have remained closed.

Sir David was banging the environmental drum long before it was fashionable to describe such action as 'green'. His pioneering approach made ecology, once the province of bookish hobbyists, a subject of mainstream interest.

During the early years of his broadcasting career, Sir David typically assumed the role of admiring observer, describing what he saw and sharing in the viewer's awe. But by the turn of the millennium, his authored documentaries adopted a more overtly environmentalist stance.

In State of the Planet (2000), he used the latest scientific evidence and interviews with leading scientists and conservationists to assess the impact of man's activities on the natural world. He later turned to the issues of global warming

in The Truth about Climate Change (2006) and human population growth in How Many People Can Live on Planet Earth? (2009).

He also contributed a programme which highlighted the plight of endangered species to the BBC's Saving Planet Earth project in 2007, the 50th anniversary of the Natural History Unit.

David Attenborough's programmes are among the BBC's bestselling international exports, ensuring that his message is heard by a global audience. His irresistibly down-to-earth style and indefatigable passion for life in all its guises have spanned generations, cultures and continents, sealing his place in history as a uniquely important environmental educator.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks and recognition go to Robert Warren for the creation of the Green Star trophy, which symbolizes efforts to “peace” the world back together following conflicts, disasters and industrial accidents. The trophy is made of recycled metal, glass and wood. The timber base is from responsible source. The casting work is carried out by Kenyan artisans who take a great deal of pride in producing a product which will be awarded at a prestigious event. The work shop is Fair Trade.

This event was made possible with the generous support of:

- Centre International de Conférence de Genève (CICG)
  www.cicg.ch/en/

- Green Cross International
  www.gcint.org/

- The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
  www.unocha.org/

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
  www.unep.org/

- The permanent mission of Japan in Geneva
  www.geneve-mission.emb-japan.go.jp/

- XXX, Switzerland

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