

## Awards

1. At its 140th session, in January 2017, the Executive Board adopted a number of decisions awarding prizes to individuals and an institution in recognition of their outstanding achievements in health development.<sup>1</sup>
2. An award ceremony for the following three prizes is scheduled to take place during the plenary meeting on the morning of Friday, 26 May 2017:
  - The **Sasakawa Health Prize** will be presented to **Dr Arslan Rinchin (Mongolia)**
  - The **United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize** will be presented to **Professor Lô Boubou Baïdy (Mauritania)**
  - The **Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health** will be presented to the **Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade (Cuba)**.
3. The call for nominations is sent out each year, after the Health Assembly, and nominations can be made by national health administrations and by any former recipient of the prizes. The laureates are designated by the Executive Board during its January session, based on recommendations made by the selection panel for each prize.
4. Over the years, the prizes have been awarded to well-known scientists and researchers or simply to dedicated people who have greatly contributed through their work to the advancement of public health, and to institutions caring for the health of local communities.
5. Further information on the prizes and on the 2017 recipients is provided in the Annex to the present document.

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<sup>1</sup> Decisions EB140(12), EB140(13) and EB140(14) (2017).

## ANNEX

### 1. Sasakawa Health Prize

The Sasakawa Health Prize is awarded for outstanding innovative work in health development to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, or a nongovernmental organization or organizations. Such work includes the promotion of given health programmes or notable advances in primary health care.

The 2017 prize has been awarded to **Dr Arslan Rinchin (Mongolia)**.

Dr Rinchin, born in 1943, is being nominated for his remarkable contribution to the advancement of primary health care in Mongolia.

Since 1971, Dr Rinchin has devoted his career to tackling viral hepatitis in Mongolia. Between 1973 and 1978, Dr Rinchin carried out research on hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) and its detection, HBsAg being the primary marker of hepatitis B virus infection. His findings demonstrated that hepatitis B was endemic in Mongolia and that it affected mainly children. In the light of this, he advocated the rapid adoption of health practices to reduce the number of infections with hepatitis B virus, namely improvement of sterilization of injection equipment and medical instruments, and an increase in hepatitis B vaccination rates. The immediate effect was that as of 1981 a slight decrease in the number of hepatitis B virus infections was measured. A further decrease was seen following the introduction in 1991 of hepatitis B vaccination in the national immunization schedule.

Dr Rinchin has published articles in national and international journals, and initiated the Expanded Programme on Immunization in Mongolia, with financing, which he helped to ensure, from WHO, UNICEF and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Funds from the Prize will be used: to support non-State actors, the National Centre for Communicable Diseases and the Ministry of Health to implement Government programmes on the control and reduction of hepatitis A, B and C; to coordinate activities to reduce stigma in families, workplaces and schools of carriers of hepatitis viruses; and to increase advocacy for better health services and laboratory testing in remote facilities and also for best practices to avoid infection. Funds will also be dedicated to organizing World Hepatitis Day and to provide financial support to young researchers. Guidelines will be developed for the use of the prize money.

### 2. United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize

The United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize is awarded for an outstanding contribution to health development to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, or a nongovernmental organization or organizations.

The 2017 prize has been awarded to **Professor Lô Boubou Baïdy (Mauritania)**.

Professor Lô Baïdy is being honoured for his substantial contribution to the establishment of the national blood transfusion centre and development of blood transfusion services, as well as for his fight against viral hepatitis, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections in Mauritania. Professor Lô Baïdy, born in 1956, has served since 2010 as Inspector General for Health in the Ministry of Health, and has been Chair of the Faculty of Medicine of Nouakchott University since 2006.

Over the past two decades, Professor Lô Baïdy has ensured the availability of structured blood banks throughout the whole country, including the most remote hospital structures, and advocated the introduction, in 2002, of vaccination against hepatitis B in the expanded immunization programme. As a result of his efforts, the immunization programme was further strengthened through the introduction of vaccination against hepatitis B within 24 hours of birth.

Professor Lô Baïdy contributed to the establishment of a national structure for the control of viral hepatitis in 2013. He also contributed to the development of HIV/AIDS/sexually transmitted infection strategies by directing the scientific coordination of two sociobehavioural and biological surveys conducted in vulnerable groups in 2007 and in 2014.

### **3. Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health**

The Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health is awarded to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, a governmental or nongovernmental organization or organizations, who have made an outstanding contribution to public health.

The 2017 prize has been awarded to the **Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade (Cuba)**.

The Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade was established in 2005. It is integrated into the medical cooperation unit of the Ministry of Public Health of Cuba, which itself has over 40 years of medical aid experience.

The Brigade is composed of Cuban health workers, including physicians and nurses, trained in disaster medicine and infectious disease containment. The volunteer teams have extensive experience in responding to disasters and major epidemic outbreaks. More than 7000 team members have intervened in countries such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, China, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan and Peru. The Brigade carried out a significant mission during the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa: over 250 health professionals provided care in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.

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