

Awards

1. At its 144th session, in January 2019, the Executive Board adopted a number of decisions awarding prizes to individuals or institutions in recognition of their outstanding achievements in health development.¹

2. An award ceremony for the following four prizes is scheduled to take place during the plenary meeting on the morning of Friday, 24 May 2019:

- the **Sasakawa Health Prize** will be presented to **Professor Judith Ndongo Embola Torimiro (Cameroon)** and **Mr Eusebio Quispe Rodríguez (Peru)**;
- the **United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize** will be presented to the **National Center for Global Health and Medicine (Japan)** and **Dr Askwar Hilonga (United Republic of Tanzania)**;
- the **State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation's His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion** will be presented to **Aging and Fragility in the Elderly Group of the Research Institute of La Paz Hospital (Spain)**;
- the **Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health** will be presented to **Professor Balram Bhargava (India)** and the **Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Public Health (Myanmar)**.

3. These prizes were created by, or set up in memory of, eminent health personalities. The call for nominations is sent out each year, after closure of the Health Assembly session, and nominations can be made by national health administrations and by any former recipient of the prizes. The recipients of the prizes are designated by the Executive Board during its January session, on the basis of 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 2019 recipients is provided in the Annex to the present document.²

¹ See decisions EB144(11), EB144(13), EB144(14) and EB144(15) (2019).

² See also the information on awards on the WHO website (<http://www.who.int/governance/awards>, accessed 27 March 2019).

ANNEX

1. Sasakawa Health Prize

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

There are two laureates of the 2019 prize: **Professor Judith Ndong Embola Torimiro (Cameroon)** and **Mr Eusebio Quispe Rodríguez (Peru)**.

Professor Judith Ndong Embola Torimiro has made an extensive contribution, since 1992, to health development in Cameroon. Professor Torimiro is presently Associate Professor of Molecular Biology and Coordinator of Laboratories in the Chantal Biya International Reference Centre for Research on the Prevention and Management of HIV/AIDS, and Chair of the Department of Biochemistry in the Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, University of Yaoundé. Professor Torimiro has over 38 peer-reviewed publications on HIV and hepatitis B, C, D and G.

Professor Torimiro's notable achievements are in the following main areas of work related to HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B and C: strengthening health systems; capacity-building, health ethics research; and training of health workers and supervising postdoctoral fellows, specifically in molecular biology. She is also recognized for her contribution to increasing awareness of, and providing outreach services on, sexually transmitted infections and cancers in women, especially in rural areas of Cameroon.

The prize money will be used to further Professor Torimiro's research on the impact of hepatitis B viral infections in pregnant and breastfeeding women and the outcome of children exposed to and/or infected by hepatitis B virus during pregnancy or breastfeeding. The results should serve to develop health policy and treatment guidelines for Cameroon.

Mr Eusebio Quispe Rodríguez, while mayor of the district of Iguain in Peru, played a key leadership role in reducing the rate of anaemia in children under 3 years of age from 65% to 12% over the past three years in Iguain. This is one of the poorest districts in the country, having experienced decades of social unrest and violent acts of terrorism. Its population was decimated, being reduced by 30%, and many more people were pushed to leave and abandon their farms and livestock.

Since 2015, under the leadership of Mr Quispe Rodríguez, the population of Iguain has been rebuilding its social fabric and improving its health conditions. Mr Quispe Rodríguez created multisectoral technical teams composed of local authorities, community leaders, staff of the health centres that are responsible for social programmes, teachers and parents. These teams manage community surveillance centres and carry out home visits to raise awareness of basic sanitation, chronic infant malnutrition and anaemia, introducing a food model created to reduce the high rate of anaemia and teaching people to improve their diets by consuming locally cultivated products, such as potatoes, quinoa and corn strengthened with state-provided micronutrients. There is a plan to replicate this model in other areas of the country.

While mayor, Mr Quispe Rodríguez and his administration made plans for an irrigation project, in order to increase agricultural productivity and thus ensure improved nutrition for their community throughout the year. The prize money will be used for this project and will also serve to create and sustain more community surveillance centres.

2. United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize

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

There are two laureates of the 2019 prize: the **National Center for Global Health and Medicine (Japan)** and **Dr Askwar Hilonga (United Republic of Tanzania)**.

The **National Center for Global Health and Medicine** has contributed to the improvement of public health, both in Japan and, through its Bureau of International Health Cooperation, in developing countries.

The National Center for Global Health and Medicine and its Bureau of International Health Cooperation work with Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official Development Assistance office as well as with implementing agencies, such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and other aid agencies and international organizations, including WHO. The Center provides technical assistance, conducts research, organizes training courses and creates networks for health in several fields, including the control of infectious diseases, human resources for health, maternal and child health and improvement of quality of care. Furthermore, the Center works towards universal health coverage in coordination with other stakeholders, including developing countries, international organizations and aid agencies.

The Center dispatches its staff as consultants (short-term or long-term) to developing countries where they transfer their knowledge and skills and provide health services to local populations. During their assignments, the consultants formulate implementation models for health activities such as surveillance, service promotion, social mobilization, outbreak response, training management and operational research, and make policy recommendations on controlling diseases. The Center has dispatched more than 3600 consultants to more than 140 countries. The Center also organizes training courses for health professionals from developing countries and has trained more than 4100 individuals from more than 140 countries. Some trainees have become high-level government officials in their respective countries.

Dr Askwar Hilonga has made an innovative contribution to ensuring access to clean water. He grew up in a rural area of the United Republic of Tanzania, where waterborne diseases were prevalent. After obtaining his PhD in nanotechnology from Hanyang University in the Republic of Korea, he started looking at nanomaterials that could be suitable for water purification, with the aim of improving access to safe drinking water and reducing the number of lives lost to waterborne diseases. Since 2011, Dr Hilonga has been Senior Lecturer at the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology. While working there, he used nanomaterials to develop a low-cost water purification system, which is protected by patent and trademark. Water that passes through the filter is clean and safe to drink. Unlike other water filters, the filter he developed can be calibrated to target, absorb and eliminate contaminants, such as toxic heavy metals, bacteria, viruses and other pollutants from mining, industrial effluent and poor sewage systems, and which are specific to a particular region. It can thus be customized according to local needs, which may differ according to geographical location.

Dr Hilonga has won many prestigious awards for his invention, including the first Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation from the Royal Academy of Engineering of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The company making them entered into an agreement with Global Sustainable Partnerships to provide the filters to 100 Tanzanian schools. The commercial use of these filters was sponsored by the United States African Development Foundation and the Human Development Innovation Fund (through UK Aid Direct, which is funded by the United Kingdom of

Great Britain and Northern Ireland's Department for International Development). Dr Hilonga is working with local entrepreneurs to create water stations. As at October 2018, 60 water stations (points where people can buy clean and safe water at affordable prices) using the filters he developed, serving 100 000 users, had been established; 400 households and 55 institutions, including schools in rural areas in the United Republic of Tanzania have already installed these filters. A total of 60 young women have been trained as operators of the water stations, and the company making the filters employs 15 staff, mostly university graduates, and collaborates with about another 120 individuals.

Dr Hilonga is planning to scale up the impact of the water purification system he developed through the establishment of franchises granting private owners the right to run the water stations in their local communities, across Africa and beyond. The first foreign franchise for 10 such water stations was signed in Kenya in 2018.

3. The State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation's His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion

The His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion is awarded to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, or a nongovernmental organization or organizations who have made an outstanding contribution to research in the areas of health care for the elderly and in health promotion.

The 2019 laureate of the prize is the **Aging and Fragility in the Elderly Group of the Research Institute of La Paz Hospital (Spain)**.

The Aging and Fragility in the Elderly Group of the Research Institute of La Paz Hospital in Madrid, established in 2006, is a multidisciplinary group of 20 researchers. The mission of the Group is to promote and improve the quality of research in the field of geriatric primary care through epidemiological studies on frailty and chronic diseases affecting elderly people.

One of its most outstanding projects is the clinical study of hip fractures in elderly people, which is undertaken by the working group on the National Registry of Hip Fractures. This working group, established in 2016, is integrated into and coordinated by the Aging and Fragility in the Elderly Group. The working group comprises a multidisciplinary research group of 190 specialists from 61 Spanish hospitals who have collected demographic, epidemiological and health care details of over 14 000 patients who have been affected by hip fracture pathology. The information contained in this registry has served to establish the most effective interventions and has led to the revision of clinical guidelines. These revised evidence-based practices have already contributed to the reduction of complications and mortality in orthogeriatric patients, average time spent in hospital and the number of specialist consultations. This has the potential to ultimately reduce health care costs.

4. 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.

There are two laureates of the 2019 prize: **Professor Balram Bhargava (India)** and the **Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Public Health (Myanmar)**.

Professor Balram Bhargava has had an impressive career as a cardiologist and biomedical innovator. He is a professor of cardiology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, and serves as the Executive Director of the Stanford-India Biodesign Programme, which provides an interdisciplinary fellowship programme that fosters innovation and design of low-cost implants and devices. The Programme led to the establishment of the School of International Biodesign: over the course of 10 years, it has trained about 100 innovators who have created over 30 low-cost medical devices, four of which are now being marketed. For more than 25 years, Professor Bhargava has treated about 250 000 patients and trained over 200 cardiologists who are now leading several departments and hospitals in India and abroad. Professor Bhargava has developed the indigenous platinum–iridium coil coronary stent and has clinically evaluated and established the use of two other laser-cut medicated Indian stents. Several thousand patients have already benefited from these low-cost stents.

Professor Bhargava has pioneered several techniques in interventional cardiology and the treatment of patients with dilated cardiomyopathy. He is currently developing a chest compression device for patients with sudden cardiac arrest. He has published several papers on the harmful cardiovascular effects of chewing tobacco and is evaluating the continuous blood pressure of bus drivers in New Delhi with difficult-to-control hypertension.

Professor Bhargava was the founding Editor-in-chief of the journal *BMJ Innovations*.

The **Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Public Health of Myanmar** has contributed to public health in Myanmar, in particular through its Community Health Clinic model, from concept to implementation. Myanmar has been struggling with the double burden of communicable and noncommunicable diseases, and the challenge of delivering health services in rural settings where 70% of its population lives. The concept of the Community Health Clinic is to strengthen community health services, through the efficient use of resources and increased promotion of health literacy.

The Community Health Clinic model places the community at the centre of care, while recognizing the contributions of community health volunteers, civil society organizations and local and international nongovernmental organizations. The health care activities provided focus on screening for hypertension and diabetes, and treatment of uncomplicated cases, health care for the ageing population and health literacy. Arrangements are made to supply essential medicines and equipment and providing training on the management of the above-mentioned conditions. Mobile clinics have been dispatched to the most remote areas.

The implementation of the Community Health Clinic model began in 2018, and after only seven months, a measurable increase in awareness and use of the public health care services had already been noted.

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