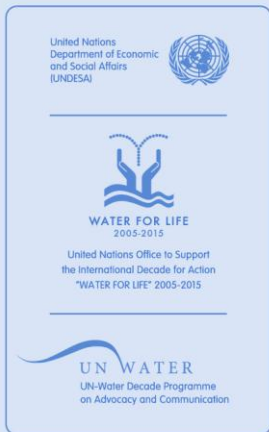


# Press release on the announcement of winners of 2013 edition of UN-Water 'Water for Life' Best Practices Award

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## 2013 edition of UN-Water ‘Water for Life’ Best Practices Award goes to Japan and the Republic of Moldova

*Category 1 has been awarded to a project focusing on groundwater management using the system of nature from Kumamoto city in Japan and Category 2 has been awarded to a project focusing on safe water and sanitation for all in the Republic of Moldova.*

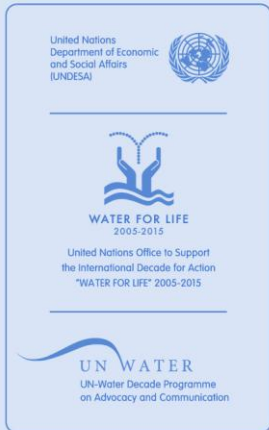
**22 March 2013** - The prize has been awarded during the official ceremony of World Water Day 2013 taking place in The Hague, the Netherlands.

The purpose of this UN-Water Award is to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015 through the recognition of outstanding best practices that can ensure the long-term sustainable management of water resources and contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed goals and targets.

The prize is awarded yearly in two categories: Category 1 is awarded to best water management practices, and Category 2 is awarded to best participatory, communication, awareness-raising and education practices. Every year, special emphasis is being put on the theme selected for World Water Day. In 2013, special focus has been given to the topic “Water cooperation”.

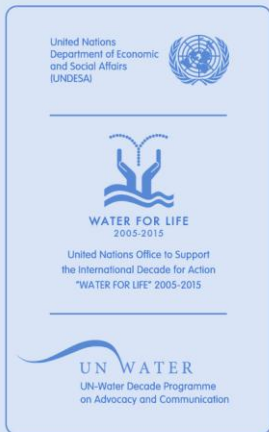
The Secretariat, ensured by the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC), received a total of 46 applications for this year’s edition: 34 for category 1 and 12 for category 2. Geographical distribution of applications is as follows: Africa 9%, Asia 31%, Europe 13%, Latin America and the Caribbean 41%, Northern America 4%, and Oceania 2%.

**Category 1**, best water management practice, has been awarded to a project implemented in the **city of Kumamoto in Japan**. Kumamoto City is located in the centre of Kyushu, the southern major island of Japan. The city is blessed with abundant groundwater in the volcanic aquifer created by Mt. Aso. Thanks to this, the drinking water for its 730,000



citizens is totally supplied by groundwater. The city has been undertaking various efforts to maintain their abundant, pure and crystal-clean groundwater so as to pass down this precious resource to their future generations. In cooperation with neighbouring municipalities, Kumamoto City government has managed artificial groundwater recharge system using abandoned paddies and protected watershed forests. By protecting the natural systems and conserving Kumamoto's high-quality groundwater, the city can provide its citizens with high quality "mineral water from the tap". The achieved system of creating groundwater in Kumamoto can be considered to be a combined work of the "natural system" of Mt. Aso and the "local human activity".

**Category 2**, best participatory, communication, awareness-raising and education practice, has been awarded to the project **"Water and sanitation for all" from the Republic of Moldova**. The Republic of Moldova remains one of the poorest countries in Europe. According to recent studies, in 2006, only 15% of the rural population in the Republic of Moldova had a house connection for drinking water, and only 55% of the population living in rural areas had access to basic sanitation. The Moldovan National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) calculated the social and economic impact of water pollution in the country and reached the conclusion that the cost to the economy was in the range of 5% - 10% of GDP. The rural citizens in the Republic of Moldova rely on small-scale water supply systems or on shallow wells which are often contaminated with micro-organisms and nitrates. Latrines are the primary form of sanitation used, which is a significant source of environmental pollution. In addition, animal waste is often not adequately stored and treated, resulting in the cross contamination of water bodies. The Safe Water and Sanitation for all in Moldova initiative aimed at improving the situation in rural Moldova by mobilizing citizens and the authorities to realize and respect the right to access safe water and sanitation through the sustainable management of local resources. Such implementation included maintaining clean water sources to improve human health, which also helps to maintain the environmental integrity of aquatic ecosystems, and thus contributes to protecting biological diversity. The impact of the activities is visible on community's behaviour: no more solid waste is dumped near the public or private wells and spring cleaning of wells is once again a tradition in the communities where awareness was raised during the project.



Finalist candidates in **category 1** include the **2<sup>nd</sup> ranked project “Living Lakes”**, which focuses on the exchange of experience and knowledge regarding the sustainable management of lakes and wetlands, and the **3<sup>rd</sup> ranked project TNDRIIP “Farmer Participatory Capacity Building Program for Drip Irrigation Management”** which trained 1,000 farmers from across 100 villages in drip irrigation in Tamil Nadu, India, from 2009 to 2012.

In **category 2**, finalist candidates include the **2<sup>nd</sup> ranked initiative “Democratisation of Water Management: Promoting community collaborative water management between government officers and villagers”** implemented in Tamil Nadu, India, and aimed at improving water service delivery and achieving sustainable and equitable water supply by changing the perspectives and behaviors of government officers in the water sector and facilitating a collaborative relationship between these officers and the communities they served, and the **3<sup>rd</sup> ranked project “Health Village: WASH Monitoring Perspective”** aimed at reducing poverty in different villages in Bangladesh through community empowerment, increased access to and use of safe water and sanitation services and improved hygiene practices for women and marginalized people.

More information on the award:

<http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/waterforlifeaward.shtml>

Additional information on the winning practices and finalists:

<http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/winners2013.shtml>

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*The Water for Life Decade 2005-2015. The primary goal of the ‘Water for Life’ Decade is to promote efforts to fulfill international commitments on water-related issues by 2015. These commitments include the Millennium Development Goal to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015, and to stop unsustainable exploitation of water resources.*

[www.un.org/waterforlifedecade](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade)

*The United Nations Office to support the International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’ 2005-2015 based in Zaragoza, Spain, implements the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC). UNW-DPAC facilitates and implements communication, information and awareness-raising activities in the framework of the ‘Water for Life’ Decade. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) hosts and leads the Office*

[www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/unwdpac.shtml](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/unwdpac.shtml)

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