

31 July 2008

Dear Sir/Madame,

Greetings!

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, I am pleased to present our Press Kit on the 2008 Ramon Magsaysay Awards, featuring this year's recipients of Asia's premier prize. The kit includes the ***official announcement*** from the Foundation's Board of Trustees, the ***individual citations*** for the seven Awardees and ***basic information*** on each of them, an ***overview of the Ramon Magsaysay Award and the Foundation*** that administers it, and ***statistical data*** on the award from 1958 to 2008.

The Foundation wishes to raise awareness of the Magsaysay Award and specifically, about this year's seven awardees, who are collectively advancing causes to improve lives across Asia. Like the other Magsaysay laureates their moral courage and impassioned insistence on making the societies they serve better, kinder and more equitable for everyone, especially for the marginalized, offer inspiring examples of faith, persistence and success for everyone.

Subsequent releases will focus on each of the individual awardees and their distinctive work, as well as the newsworthy activities during their visit to Manila from 26 August to 3 September 2008 for the formal conferment of their awards at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on August 31st. In the meantime, a ***list of media events*** is included to help you schedule coverage assignments and develop features on this year's Magsaysay laureates.

We hope you will use these materials prominently. With your support, the larger public will be encouraged and inspired by the good news from Asia reflected in the lives and work of the extraordinary Magsaysay awardees.

Let us link hands in promoting "***greatness of spirit in selfless service to the people!***"

Thank you in advance for your invaluable support.

Sincerely,

(Original Signed)
CARMENCITA T. ABELLA
President

31 July 2008

PRESS RELEASE

2008 Ramon Magsaysay Awardees Announced

The Board of Trustees of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) today announced that this year seven individuals and one organization from India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka will receive Asia's premier prize, the Ramon Magsaysay Award. The Awardees are:

Grace Padaca, from the Philippines, for *Government Service*. She is being recognized for "*her empowering voters in the Philippines' Isabela province to reclaim their democratic right to elect leaders of their own choosing, and to contribute as full partners in their own development.*"

Center for Agriculture & Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI), from the Philippines, for *Public Service*. They are being honored for "*successful adaptation of microfinance in the Philippines, providing self-sustaining and comprehensive services for half a million poor women and their families.*"

Therdchai Jivacate, from Thailand, for *Public Service*. He is being honored for "*his dedicated efforts in Thailand to provide inexpensive, practical, and comfortable artificial limbs even to the poorest amputees.*"

Prakash Amte and Mandakini Amte, from India, for *Community Leadership*. They are being recognized for "*enhancing the capacity of the Madia Gonds to adapt positively in today's India, through healing and teaching and other compassionate interventions.*"

Ahmad Syafii Maarif, from Indonesia, for *Peace and International Understanding*. He is being honored for "*his guiding Muslims to embrace tolerance and pluralism as the basis for justice and harmony in Indonesia and in the world at large.*"

Akio Ishii, from Japan, for *Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts*. He is being recognized for "*his principled career as a publisher, placing discrimination, human rights, and other difficult subjects squarely in Japan's public discourse.*"

Ananda Galapatti, from Sri Lanka, for *Emergent Leadership*. He is being recognized for "*his spirited personal commitment to bring appropriate and effective psychosocial services to victims of war trauma and natural disasters in Sri Lanka.*"

Established in 1957, the Ramon Magsaysay Award is Asia's highest honor and is widely regarded as the region's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. It celebrates the memory and leadership example of the third Philippine President, and is given every year to individuals or organizations in Asia who manifest the same sense of selfless service that ruled the life of the late and beloved Filipino leader.

"The Magsaysay awardees of 2008," says *RMAF President Carmencita T. Abella*, "are indeed pathfinders in a changing Asia, charting new ways to address persistent, often intractable problems in their societies. Working in different countries on diverse issues of poverty, prejudice, politics, livelihoods, and health, these awardees nevertheless share an uncommon faith in the tremendous potential of people and social institutions. They share as well an indomitable will and persistence to tap into this potential and thus create greater, and lasting, good. Mobilizing many others to join their efforts, their accomplishments bring us reassuring news of progress, justice, healing, reform, and hope. In a world grown increasingly fragmented and cynical, the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation is uniquely privileged to be the bearer of such inspiring news from Asia."

The Magsaysay Award is currently given in six categories:

Government Service – for "outstanding service in the public interest in any branch of government, including executive, judicial, legislative, or military."

Public Service – for "outstanding service to the public good by a private citizen."

Community Leadership – for "leadership of a community toward helping the disadvantaged have fuller opportunities and a better life."

Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts – for "effective writing, publishing, photography, or use of radio, television, cinema, or theater as a power for public good."

Peace and International Understanding – for "outstanding contributions to the advancement of friendship, peace and solidarity as the foundations for sustainable development within and across countries."

Emergent Leadership – for "outstanding work of an individual, 40 years of age and below, on issues of social change in his/her community, but whose leadership is not yet broadly recognized outside of this community."

The eight 2008 Magsaysay awardees join 263 other laureates who have received Asia's highest honor to date. This year's Magsaysay Award winners will each receive a certificate, a medallion bearing the likeness of the late President, and a cash prize. They will be formally conferred the Magsaysay Award during the Presentation Ceremonies to be held on 31 August 2008 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, to which the public is cordially invited.

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