

World Harmony Run 25th Anniversary Ceremony –Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, NY

- Introduction of Torch-Bearer Award
- Presentation by Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations.
- Acceptance by Mr Takahiro Nakamae, Minister of General Affairs of the Japan Mission.
- Harashita Sunaoshi, co-ordinator of the WHR in Japan, presented Jharna-Kala artwork by WHR founder Sri Chinmoy, dedicated to Japan.

Salil Wilson , Executive Director, World Harmony Run

At this stage I would like to introduce a programme we started. As we run with these torches throughout the world, invariably we come across people who inspire us, people who are pioneers, people who serve their community, who live a life dedicated to service. We meet them and we love them and then we run on! And so, to recognise and to honour their lives of service, we created an award called the World Harmony Run Torch-Bearer Award.

There are actually two entities - One is an organization and one is a country – that we will be presenting this award to today. And we are very honoured to have a former Torch-Bearer Award recipient to present the first award. This gentleman has served as Ambassador of Bangladesh to the United Nations, and more recently served as Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations. He has dedicated his life to the cause of peace and has been a moving force for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace. He is a dear friend of Sri Chinmoy's, a dear friend of ours – will you please give a warm welcome to Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury. Thank you.

Remarks by Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury at the opening ceremony of the World Harmony Run at the UN on 12 April 2012

Ambassador Chowdhury: Greetings to all of you. I am very delighted that I am able to be present at this ceremony, a wonderful observance of the 25th anniversary of the World Harmony Run. I have been a participant – not as a runner, but joining in force with Sri Chinmoy himself, I remember, in my early years here, in the early

'80s and then the '90s. I was here and I had the privilege of meeting him, talking to him, spending lots of time and speaking in my own language, Bangla, with him. I think I was one of the very few people with whom he would communicate in our mother language. That was a great pleasure, and I consider him, and he considered me – I am privileged to say – as a brother-friend. So I am delighted to be here.

Sri Chinmoy's work and dedication and determination to promote peace throughout the world were manifested in various ways: through his poems, through his music, through his paintings, through his expression of physical strength. And this World Harmony Run is his contribution to the world as a means to bring people together. This is a wonderful event that takes place all over the world. We saw how many countries are represented in today's ceremony. This is a beautiful thing.

I am here to present this year's World Harmony Run Torch-Bearer Award to the people of Japan. *[Applause]* This award has been dedicated to the people of Japan in general, because peace is a part of Japanese existence. I think their commitment to peace, their commitment to promote world understanding, is impeccable. And we recognize that. But today we also recognize the strength, the fortitude, the forbearance, the patience, the faith, the determination and the resilience of the people of Japan after the tsunami and the earthquake that struck that country last year. And I think we, the rest of the world, have a lot to learn from Japan, where they face disaster and destruction with a spontaneous support to each other. It is really an example for all of us. That is why the organizers of the World Harmony Run have decided to dedicate this award to the people of Japan.

I have the great pleasure of inviting Mr. Takahiro Nakamae, who is a Minister in the Japanese Mission to the United Nations, who will receive this award on behalf of the people of Japan.

Minister Nakamae --- Omedeto gozaimas!!!

Ambassador Chowdhury garlands Mr. Nakamae with the World Harmony Run Torch-Bearer Award, and they both hold the torch

Ambassador Chowdhury: I will invite Mr. Nakamae to say a few words, but before that, arigatou gozaimasu .

Mr. Takahiro Nakamae [remarks as delivered]: Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my intention is not to bore you with a lengthy speech, but I cannot help announcing some words of gratitude to all of you. It is for me an honour to join you and a great pleasure to address the participants of this year's extraordinary global relay in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the World Harmony Run. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to extend my congratulations to the organisers and supporters for their many years of hard work for the promotion of international friendship and understanding. Furthermore, I am deeply honored to receive on behalf of the people of Japan the Torch-Bearer Award, a symbol of this remarkable torch race around the world. This medal will serve as a memento for the Japanese people of the solidarity the international community expressed to them during the difficulties caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Last May, an international team from the World Harmony Run visited Japan's hardest-hit areas from the Great East Japan Earthquake, where their activities at elementary schools taught the young student survivors about the strength and courage they had within themselves. In Japanese, we use the word "kizuna," which could be translated as "bonds," as a concept which has very much to do with Sri Chinmoy's idea of "oneness." We believe in that idea of *kizuna*. Each day our belief is becoming more and more strong.

The Run itself is an embodiment of a certain enduring spirit. The world has witnessed the Great East Japan Earthquake survivors' resilience over the past year, and I can see this same spirit alive in the participating runners. Now, a little over a year later, the people of the Tohoku region who are on their path to recovery will welcome the global relay runners this May. Over ten local government entities have endorsed this year's World Harmony Run in Japan. I applaud all the runners who will run across the region over the course of five days. Their ability to run such a distance is a testament to the determination to display global solidarity.

Today at the United Nations Headquarters, the General Assembly is holding a thematic debate on Disaster Risk Reduction. Japan is wholeheartedly participating in this debate. I hope that these events encourage the survivors of the devastated areas not only in Japan but also all over the world, and that they will see how the world continues to send their support and promises to do all that is possible to prevent such disasters in the future.

Once again, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the organisers and participants of the 2012 Global Relay. Your support for the values and spirit which the United Nations strives to achieve, as well as for the people of Japan, who believe in “*kizuna*” and “*oneness*,” is highly cherished by the international community, and I encourage you all to continue running for world harmony.

Thank you very much.

Salil Wilson: We would like to offer you a painting by Sri Chinmoy. He felt that peace and harmony found expression in all fields of human endeavour – through writing, through poetry, through music, and through art. He was a prolific artist, and we would like to offer you this particular piece from his artwork, which he called Jharna-Kala – “Fountain-Art.” Thank you.

Harashita Sunaoshi, co-ordinator of the WHR in Japan, presents to Mr. Nakamae a plaque of Sri Chinmoy’s painting called “Mother Nature”