

## The Recognition of "Friend of El Salvador"

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On November 4th, in Taipei, Taiwan, Dharma Master Cheng Yen, founder of the Tzu Chi Foundation, was awarded the "Friend of El Salvador". This award recognizes the selfless effort of Master Cheng Yen in leading the Foundation to help survivors of earthquakes and hurricanes in El Salvador over the past decade.

The award ceremony was held in Taipei. Representing the El Salvador government, H.E. Ambassador Marta Chang de Tsien said that they are truly touched by the passion and the tender attitude of Tzu Chi volunteers in helping their people.

The spokesman of Tzu Chi Foundation, Rey-Sheng Her received the award on Master Cheng Yen's behalf. He said that Tzu Chi and the El Salvador people have built a sincere relationship through the long-time interaction of love and caring.

El Salvador, with a total area of 21,476 square kilometres, is the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America. Due to its geographical location, the country was overwhelmed by earthquakes, hurricanes, year after year.

Since 1998, Tzu Chi delivers emergency relief to El Salvador by providing medical treatments and life supplies like clothes, food and blankets to survivors in times of disasters. When Hurricane Ida hit El Salvador in 2009, Tzu Chi immediately provided aid to survivors and evacuees; in total 650 households (2,754 individuals) benefited from the distribution. In June 2010, Tzu Chi again provided prompt aid to survivors of Hurricane Agatha.

In the long term relief, Tzu Chi built two Dai Ai villages in Sacacoyo and Chanmico townships for about 1,175 families after the devastating 2001 earthquakes (measuring 7.6 and 6.6 on the Richter Scale), and has never ended support and care for the needy in the country.