

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) Asia and the Pacific and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

Title of initiative:	Strengthening UN/ISDR presence in Asia and Pacific
Countries primarily supported:	Indian Ocean countries
Duration:	From June 2005 to 31 December 2006

Objectives

- The overall objective of the initiative was to coordinate regional efforts for the establishment of sustainable early warning systems and the strengthening of preparedness plans and resilience to disasters by the countries affected by the 26 December 2004 tsunami.
- Specific objective was to contribute to the assessment, evaluation and strengthening of Early Warning Systems and disaster preparedness in the countries affected by the 26 December 2004 tsunami in South and South East Asia.

Achievements

➤ **Public Awareness and Education**

- A public awareness and education workshop for media and broadcasters was jointly hosted by the UN/ISDR Asia and the Pacific, UN/ISDR-PPEW and the UNESCAP in Bangkok, 7-8 September 2005. Forty participants from national institutes, broadcasting agencies, NGOs, UN agencies and international organizations such as IFRC devised plans to implement public awareness campaigns and identify synergies.
- A publication, “Disaster Reduction in Asia and Pacific – ISDR Informs”⁸⁵ was produced by the UN/ISDR Asia and the Pacific in consultation with the members of the ISDR Asia Partnership on Disaster Reduction.⁸⁶ It included a special report entitled “The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami: One year after”. The English version (3,000 copies) and its translated versions (2,000 copies of each of the Chinese, Bahasa Indonesia and Russian) were distributed to key in-country partners in the affected countries in the region.
- A publication of the UN/ISDR, “Living with Risk” was translated into Bahasa Indonesia through the assistance of the Indonesian Society for Disaster Management (MPBI). A board game “Riskland Game” (2,500 copies), Hyogo Framework of Action and UN/ISDR’s Education Campaign brochures were translated into Thai by the national Disaster Warning Centre of Thailand and disseminated to UN, technical institutions, Ministry of Education, local schools in disaster prone areas and other partners throughout Thailand.
- Three trainees from Vanuatu, Fiji and Sri Lanka participated in a training course on “Applications of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems for Natural Hazard Management and Disaster Reduction”.
- Support materials and comic books on tsunami and earthquake disaster preparedness developed by IDEP Foundation in Indonesia were distributed to 11,000 tsunami and earthquake affected coastal communities and schools at risk in Bali, Indonesia.

⁸⁵ <http://www.unisdr.org/asiapacific/ap-informs/ap-informs.htm>

⁸⁶ The ISDR Asia Partnership on Disaster Reduction was started in 2003 by Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). At the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (January 2005, Kobe, Japan), the UN Member States requested an UN/ISDR’s presence in Asia and the Pacific. As a result, ISDR Asia and the Pacific (hosted by UNESCAP) was established in Bangkok, Thailand, in June 2005.

➤ **Coordination and Partnerships-building**

- The UN/ISDR Asia and the Pacific was established in Bangkok to support multi-partner activities in the region which targeted national-level disaster risk reduction efforts and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The office has been operational since June 2005, supporting tsunami early warning activities through advocacy, partnership-building as well as information sharing and exchange of experiences.
- The UN/ISDR Asia and the Pacific, ISDR Asia Partnership members and ASEAN secretariat jointly celebrated the International Day for Disaster Reduction on 11 October 2006 in Bangkok. The event included a roundtable with journalists, an exhibition, and a handing-over ceremony of UN/ISDR's Field Libraries to ADPC, NDWC and UNESCAP. A local tsunami-affected school children were invited to test UN/ISDR's on-line and board games and a presentation on disaster risk reduction was made in cooperation with UNIS.
- The UN/ISDR Asia and the Pacific and UNESCAP, in cooperation with UNESCO/IOC and ISDR Asia Partnership members, convened a workshop "Regional Workshop on Mitigation, Preparedness and Development for Tsunami Early Warning Systems" in Bangkok, 14 - 16 June 2006. Over 130 experts from 25 Indian Ocean countries shared experiences in integrating tsunami early warning systems into disaster risk reduction and development processes.
- Based on the outcomes of the above-mentioned workshop, draft terms of reference (TOR) were drafted to establish Working Group 6 on Mitigation Preparedness and Response of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG) for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System. The outcomes of the workshop and the proposed TOR were endorsed by the ICG in its meeting in Bali, Indonesia, 31 July - 2 August 2006.⁸⁷
- As a follow-up to the above-mentioned regional workshop (14-16 June 2006), a scientific review⁸⁸ was undertaken by Dr. Sarath Abayawardene (with support from UNESCAP for three selected tsunami-affected communities in Sri Lanka (Galle, Ampara, Jaffna) on natural hazards early warning and forecasting related services. In this review, socio-economic profiles of community-based disaster risk management of these three communities in Sri Lanka have been compiled through field surveys.
- The UN/ISDR Asia and the Pacific facilitated the development of a Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) for Thailand as a key component of UNDP Thailand's project on end-to-end warning system and preparedness for tsunami and other natural disasters.
- The UN/ISDR Asia and the Pacific also supported UNDP Maldives with the organization of a national consultation for the development of a national plan for early warning.

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⁸⁷ <http://www.unescap.org/unis/press/2006/jun/g28.asp>

<http://www.unisdr.org/ppew/tsunami/ICG-IOTWS-3.htm>

http://www.unisdr.org/ppew/tsunami/pdf/Workshop_outcome_report14-16_June.pdf

⁸⁸ Reports are available at TEWIS: http://unisdr.unbonn.org/initiative_viewer.php?initiative_id=53