

**Communiqué of the International Coordination Meeting for the  
Development of a Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System for the Indian  
Ocean within a global framework**

Held in Paris on 3-8 March 2005

Issued in Paris, 8 March 2005

**COMMUNIQUE**

We, the participants at the International Coordination Meeting for the Development of a Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System for the Indian Ocean within a global framework held in Paris on 3-8 March 2005:

Recognising that the recent Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December 2004, considered to be one of the strongest in the world, resulted in devastations amounting to national calamities in the Indian Ocean. This has been the deadliest tsunami of all time by an order of magnitude, and has led to a call for action for the entire global community;

Recalling the direction and guidance provided by the Special ASEAN Leaders' meeting in Jakarta on 6 January 2005, the UN Conference on Small Island Developing States held at Port Louis on 14 January 2005, the UNGA Resolution 59/279 in New York on 19 January 2005, the Common Statement of the Special Session on Indian Ocean Disaster and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 both adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe on 22 January 2005, the Ministerial Declaration in Phuket on 29 January 2005, the GEO Communiqué in Brussels on 16 February 2005, and the technical meetings held in Indian and China;

Recognising the need to develop a tsunami warning and mitigation system in the Indian Ocean with the purpose of enhancing all aspects of tsunami disaster mitigation, including hazard assessment, detection and warnings, preparedness, and research through international cooperation and coordination of activities;

Noting that, despite the infrequent occurrence of tsunamis in the Indian Ocean, tsunamis could occur at anytime and can be very devastating as was the case on 26 December 2004. Therefore, to be effective, a tsunami warning and mitigation system for the Indian Ocean must be durable;

Noting it is important to improve the science of issuing tsunami warnings to reduce false alarms given the inordinate inconvenience and disruptions to normal life caused by false alarms, especially given the high population densities and intensive operations in coastal areas in the Indian Ocean, and also to continuously improve forecasting;

Recognising that the impact of tsunamis can be substantially reduced through institutional and legislative frameworks as well as community participation, and that this requires that tsunami warnings must reach local communities by

various means and be understood at all levels, so that people are well informed and motivated towards safety measures and actions;

Recognising that national tsunami disaster mitigation programmes will benefit from partnerships between governmental institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations;

Recommend that the IOC Assembly establish, in accordance with its rules of procedures, an Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWS), which will govern the system. Such a group will be composed of interested IOC Member States from the Indian Ocean region. All the other Members of the IOC, as well as relevant concerned international and regional organizations, will be welcome to participate as observers;

Recommend that the IOC Secretariat act as the secretariat to the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the IOTWS;

Agree that the IOTWS should consist of a coordinated network of national systems and capacities, and that all associated assets should be owned and operated by the Member States hosting or otherwise taking responsibilities for them;

Agree that the Member States should have the responsibility to have control over the issuance of warning within their respective territories;

Agree that the Member States build public awareness through education and capacity building to ensure effective community awareness of the risks posed by tsunami, so that their population is prepared for, and knows how to act in the event of a tsunami warning;

Recommend that, to facilitate durability, the IOTWS should utilise or build on, where possible, existing organisations and institutions and complement existing warning frameworks, including within a multi-hazard approach where appropriate;

Recommend that each Member State in the Indian Ocean quickly identify and establish a National Tsunami Warning Centre or operational contact point in the relevant responsible agency, along with a response plan, to be able to receive and react to warnings on a 24x7 basis and further rapidly disseminate warning information;

Recommend that each Member State in the Indian Ocean identify a disaster management national focal point for increasing public awareness of tsunami, within a multi-hazard approach as appropriate;

Recommend that all Member States make every endeavour to share seismic, sea-level and other data relevant to tsunamigenic events at or near real-time with interested Member States;

Recommend that all Member States make every endeavour to share national assessments and warnings of tsunamigenic events and tsunamis with interested Member States in a timely manner;

Welcome the various intentions and plans of Member States in the Indian Ocean to establish effective and durable national systems for tsunami early warning;

Welcome the intentions and plans of Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand to establish systems and capacities to detect potential tsunamigenic events, detect and measure tsunami, and issue appropriate warning to forecast their impacts and to provide such information and warnings to other interested Member States;

Welcome that other centres may be established to act as dissemination points for the relay of information and for technical support and training, such as the one proposed by France for the South West Indian Ocean;

Recommend that efforts to establish an IOTWS be appropriately consistent with efforts to implement the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and the Hyogo Framework for Action;

Welcome the many generous offers of financial, technical and other kinds of assistance made by key countries across the globe to help establish an IOTWS;

Encourage all Member States to provide financial, technical and other kinds of assistance in order to promote national capacity and cooperation as well as preparedness, mitigation and prevention, if so requested by the Member States in the Indian Ocean;

Welcome that, in addition to the steps taken, or to be taken, by countries of the Indian Ocean, the UNESCO/IOC and ISDR for interim tsunami warning, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and the Japan Meteorological Agency have agreed to provide, if requested, reliable interim tsunami advisory information to authorized contacts in the Indian Ocean states. Member States are requested to provide to UNESCO/IOC their official 24x7 contact information (prime and alternate) for receiving this information by 1 April 2005;

Welcome also the attention and intention to address tsunami disaster mitigation in other oceans and seas, such as South-East Asia and the South China Sea, within the global framework;

Note the need to develop mechanisms for effective coordination of tsunami warning systems for all at-risk regions on a global basis;

Appreciate the financial contribution made by Japan through the UN Flash Appeal to help make the first meeting possible;

Agree to consider, inter alia, at the Second International Coordination Meeting for the Development of an IOTWS the following issues: (a) keep under constant scrutiny the status of the system and how it satisfies the needs (b) the coordination of donor activities and other tsunami related activities;

Recommend that the IOC Secretariat enter into consultation with Member States with the view to addressing the feasibility of constituting ad hoc technical working groups on: (a) measurement systems, including data management, standards and interoperability; (b) risk management, including assessment and modelling; and (c) warning systems, including dissemination and communications. The IOC Secretariat will report to the April meeting on the progress of this recommendation.

Welcome and accept the generous offer of the Republic of Mauritius to host the second International Coordination Meeting for the Development of an Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System at high level to be held at Port Louis on 14-16 April 2005;