

# Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System

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**Tsunami Ready, a community performance based programme has been initiated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO** to promote tsunami preparedness through active collaboration of public, community leaders, and national and local emergency management agencies. The main objective of this programme is to **improve coastal community's preparedness for tsunami emergencies, to minimize the loss of life and property and to ensure a structural and systematic approach in building community preparedness** through fulfilling the best-practice indicators set by the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWMS) of UNESCO-IOC.

## IOTWMS

The Indian Ocean tsunami (26 December 2004) killed over 230,000 people, displaced more than one million people, and left a massive trail of destruction along the coasts of the affected countries. Recognizing the need for an early warning system, the Indian Ocean Member States turned to the **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO to form an Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG) to implement an Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS)**, and in other oceans as well.

Since the Indian Ocean tsunami tragedy, considerable progress has been made in the **installation of vital earthquake and tsunami detection equipment**. The implementation of the core components of the IOTWS, with further **seismic and sea level monitoring capacity being added to the core networks** has been complemented with a **24/7 network of very active Tsunami Warning Focal Points (TWFPs) that communicate with each other**

**and perform frequent communication tests.**

Significant progress also has been made towards establishing a network of **Regional Tsunami Watch Providers (RTWPs)**, to replace the Interim Advisory Service. **India began operating its national system in June 2008, followed by Australia, Malaysia and Indonesia that same year.** While national governments have primary responsibility for defining and implementing national preparedness procedures, **UNESCO/ IOC has been supporting the development of technical, educational and communication plans that are scientifically based and culturally adapted.** The governance model of the regional ICGs has provided important insights into establishing systems responsibly within nationally owned end-to-end systems.