Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System

August 7, 2020

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.