

UNESCO Reviews Tsunami Warning Systems



UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) is holding an international symposium from 12 to 14 February to take stock of lessons learned concerning tsunami preparedness over the past 13 years, and challenges ahead. The first meeting on the subject took place in March 2005, following the deadly Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004. The symposium reflects the determination of the director-general of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, to rally the international community's support for the development of tsunami warning systems, prevention through education and public campaigns to raise awareness of signs indicating the approach of such events.

Increased awareness

Considerable developments have occurred in the field since 2005: tsunami detection technologies have evolved, social media have become more important in times of danger, multiple risk systems have been developed, and awareness has increased. The meeting, *Advances in Tsunami Warning to Enhance Community Responses*, aims to draw lessons from past tsunamis, assess the successes and weaknesses of warning systems and identify ways to improve them.

Over three days the meeting will bring together members of the scientific community and of monitoring networks, among them seismologists, researchers, representatives of civilian protection authorities, operational centres, national monitoring and prevention services, as well as the private sector.

The first Tsunami Warning System was [created](#) in the Pacific in 1965, five years after a devastating tsunami hit the coasts of Chili, Hawaii, Japan and the Philippines. UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission ensures the governance of the system which has served as a model for the establishment under the aegis of the IOC of three new warning systems since 2005; in the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and Northwest Atlantic, as well as the Mediterranean.