July 2007
US IOTWS Program Update

US Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program
from advanced technologies to resilient communities

Global Telecommunications System Equipment Upgraded in Sri Lanka and the Maldives
June 2007, Male, Maldives, and Colombo, Sri Lanka

Under the US IOTWS Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provided Sri Lanka and the Maldives with state-of-the-art communication systems. The upgrade of Global Telecommunications System (GTS) equipment supports the fast and reliable data exchange that is essential for responding to multi-hazard events, including tsunamis. The GTS is part of a global network for the transmission of meteorological data from weather stations, satellites, and numerical weather prediction centers. The upgrades include the installation of Message Switching Systems (MSS) and meteorological workstations, which were integrated into the national meteorological centers in Colombo and Male. Technical support from NOAA also includes training for operational staff and a one-year maintenance contract.

Indonesian Officials Strengthen Tsunami Early Warning Communications and Procedures
July 11-13, 2007, Banten, Indonesia

Indonesian disaster management specialists met in Banten Province to review and strengthen their local tsunami early warning systems and standard operating procedures (SOPs). More than 40 disaster managers participated in the workshop, which aimed to strengthen links between provincial and local government officials, as well as relevant stakeholders, to deliver warning messages effectively to the public at risk. During this USAID-supported workshop, officials at the Meteorological and Geophysical Agency (BMG) of Indonesia mapped the pathways in which warning messages are conveyed from the central office to regional BMG offices. Participants discovered an important communications gap during the group exercise which prompted BMG to hold follow-up meetings in Jakarta so that warning messages will be conveyed seamlessly down the command chain from the national to the regional level.

Indonesian officials mapping warning communications pathways in group discussions

Bryan J. Fisher

Sri Lankans Visit U.S. to Reinforce ICS and Disaster Management Skills
July 14-28, 2007, Vallejo, California, USA

The U.S. Forest Service recently conducted a Study Tour under the US IOTWS Program for 10 Sri Lankan disaster managers on Incident Command System as practiced in the U.S. Participants visited the offices of NOAA, Washington State Office of Emergency Management, Oregon State Office of Emergency Management, the Pacific Northwest Interagency Coordination Center and the Northern California Interagency Operations Center. The latter part of the tour was highlighted by a three-day stay on a wildland fire incident being managed by the U.S. Forest Service's Type One Incident Management Team.

Regional Observers Learn Invaluable Lessons from Thailand Tsunami Drill, Largest of its Kind

July 25–July 28, 2007, Thailand

On July 25, The Government of Thailand set a major milestone in development of tsunami warning system capabilities, holding the largest tsunami warning exercise in the region to date. Twenty-four communities in the tsunami-effective areas along the southern coasts participated in the exercise which was heralded as a major success in terms of achieving high levels of participation, raising awareness, showcasing effective warning system operations, and, in particular, identifying areas for improvement. The exercise represented the culmination of a two year effort under the US IOTWS Program to help Thailand develop its capacity for rapidly issuing tsunami alerts, and to promote regional sharing of the experience. Participants from nearby countries saw the simulation as offering immediate concrete lessons to take home, including important steps to improve elements of their own disaster management systems, continued exchange of important scientific and technical information, and the creation of new bilateral working relationships.

Courtesy of the Phuket Gazette

Community members in Phuket evacuate as part of the Andaman Wave 2007 tsunami drill.

Disaster Management Specialists from Indian Ocean Participate in First Offering from the International Tsunami Training Institute (ITTI)

July 21—August 2, 2007, Seattle, Washington

Thirty-one participants from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, and the Maldives took part in the inaugural two-week training course which marks the initial offering under the ITTI, an accredited training program funded under the US IOTWS Program and offered at the University of Washington and the Asian Institute of Technology. Through a combination of lectures, exercises, simulations, and field visits, participants strengthened their understanding of forecasting and detection, hazard assessment, and community preparedness and response.

UPCOMING US IOTWS PROGRAM AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Multi-hazards workshop on CONOPS and RANET, August 6-10, 2007
    Colombo, Sri Lanka
    For more information contact Indira Fernando at indira@iotws.org, or Ed Young at edward.young@noaa.gov

Tsunami Early Warning System Regional Workshop, August 13-14, 2007
    Sanur, Indonesia
    For more information contact Stacey Tighe at stighe@cbn.net.id, or S.H.M. Fakhruddin at fakhruddin@adpc.net

Coastal Community Resilience Regional Workshop, August 14-16, 2007
    Sanur, Indonesia
    For more information contact Stacey Tighe at stighe@cbn.net.id, or Atiq Ahmed at atiqka@adpc.net

Advanced Seismology for Tsunami Warnings Workshop, August 20-24, 2007
    Bangkok, Thailand
    For more information contact Walter Mooney at mooney@usgs.gov

Training Workshop on DART Data Analysis, August 27-28, 2007
    Bangkok, Thailand
    For more information contact S.H.M. Fakhruddin at fakhruddin@adpc.net

CONOPS Seminar for Senior Disaster Management Officials, August 23-24, 2007
    Bangkok, Thailand
    For more information contact S.H.M. Fakhruddin at fakhruddin@adpc.net, or Ed Young at edward.young@noaa.gov

---

About the US Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program
The US IOTWS Program is part of the international effort to develop tsunami warning system capabilities in the Indian Ocean following the December 2004 tsunami disaster. The US program adopts an "end-to-end" approach—addressing regional, national, and local aspects of a truly functional warning system—along with multiple other hazards that threaten communities in the region. In partnership with the international community, national governments, and other partners, the US program offers technology transfer, training, and information resources to strengthen the tsunami warning and preparedness capabilities of national and local stakeholders in the region.
For more information please visit **www.us-iotws.gov**.

U.S. Contribution to the
**Indian Ocean
Tsunami Warning
System**