

# WORLD TSUNAMI AWARENESS DAY

5 NOVEMBER 2016



1

## Commemoration in the Caribbean region

20 October 2016, Headquarters of the ACS Secretariat,  
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

### 1. Background

In 2016, World Tsunami Awareness Day will be observed for the first time. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution designated the 5<sup>th</sup> of November as World Tsunami Awareness Day (GA A/70/472/Add.3) and stipulated that UNISDR, in collaboration with relevant organizations of the United Nations system, will assist with its observance.

November 5 was selected by United Nation General Assembly to coincide with the annual anniversary of the 1854 Inamura-no-hi (Fire of Inamura) event. On this day, a villager in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan through his quick action had saved countless lives when he set fire to sheaves of rice on the top of a hill, thus warning people of the imminent danger of a tsunami. This was the first documented instance of a tsunami early warning.

This first World Tsunami Awareness Day will focus on effective education and evacuation drills. Although Tsunamis do not occur very frequently, they can cause huge disasters as the 2004 Indian Ocean which affected 14 different countries and resulted in more than 227.000 casualties.

The Government of Japan supports worldwide the preparation of events related to the World Tsunami Awareness Day. The event in the Caribbean region will be organized within the framework of the Special Committee Meeting of the Disaster Risk Reduction annually organized by the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).



The World Tsunami Awareness Day supports the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 as well as the Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy 2014-2024 contributing among others to the following areas: greater risk understanding, management, investment in resilience, enhancing preparedness, reduced mortality, increased early warning, deployment of traditional knowledge and practices.

The World Tsunami Awareness Day will also provide an opportunity to reaffirm the inherent interlinkage between disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals can only be possible if all aspects of social and economic development consider the impact of disasters, while the success of the Sendai Framework relies on addressing the underlying causes of people's vulnerability to disasters, including poverty and inequality.

## 2. Introduction

Although storms, floods and hurricanes are common natural hazards to happen, the region is vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis as well. The most likely tsunamis to affect the region are those which can be triggered by shallow earthquakes (less than 50km in depth, greater than magnitude 6.5). Based on historical evidence, the Caribbean is expected to experience approximately one destructive tsunami every fifty years<sup>1</sup> generated by earthquakes occurring within the region.

Tsunamis have impacted the Caribbean in the past and are, therefore, expected to occur in the future. In the past 500 years there have been at least ten destructive, confirmed earthquake-generated tsunamis in the Caribbean basin with four causing fatalities. An estimated number of more than 3000 people are thought to have been killed by these events<sup>2</sup>.

The following initiatives aim to strengthen tsunami resilience and build on previous efforts such as the Caribbean Hazard Mitigation Capacity Building Programme (CHAMP)<sup>3</sup>:

- The **Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (ICG/CARIBE EWS)** was established in 2005 as a subsidiary body of the IOC-UNESCO with the purpose of providing efficient assistance on tsunami risk reduction to Member States in the Caribbean region after the lessons learnt from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) is the official Tsunami Service Provider (TSP) for the Caribbean and adjacent regions as from

<sup>1</sup> [Summer Edition of Portside](#) (June 2016), [NOAA NGDC/WDS Global Historical Tsunami Database](#), doi:10.7289/V5PN93H7

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.uwiseismic.com/Downloads/Tsunami%20Smart\\_Pamphlet\\_Tsunami.pdf](http://www.uwiseismic.com/Downloads/Tsunami%20Smart_Pamphlet_Tsunami.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> CDEMA coordinated the CHAMPS initiative from 2002 to 2006. The objective of the initiative was to enhance regional capacity to reduce vulnerability to the affects of natural hazards. It included the development of national hazard mitigation policies and programmes, the promotion of the wider use of hazard information in development decisions, and the strengthening of safe building practices, training and certification.



June 2016. Scientists and disaster management agencies are in the process of developing a fully-fledged end-to-end tsunami warning system. The guidelines for the ICG/CARIBE EWS activities are compiled in the [CARIBE EWS Implementation Plan](#).

- The **Caribbean Tsunami Information Centre (CTIC)** was established in 2013 and is an organ of the Intergovernmental Coordinating Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (ICG/CARIBE EWS).
- The [Caribbean Tsunami Warning Programme](#) coordinates efforts with the Caribbean Tsunami Information Center (Barbados) as well as working closely with the seismic, sea level and GPS operators and the designated National Tsunami Warning Focal Points and Tsunami National Contacts.
- **Caribe Wave** is an annual Caribbean and Adjacent Regions Tsunami Exercise<sup>4</sup>. The purpose of the exercise is to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the Tsunami Warning Systems, its operational Tsunami Warning Centers, and its Member States in responding to a destructive tsunami. The exercise provides an opportunity for countries to exercise their operational lines of communications, review their tsunami warning and emergency response procedures, and to promote emergency preparedness.
- Since 2001, the National Weather Service (NWS) of the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has been implementing the recognition program, **Tsunami Ready™**.
- In 2010, CDEMA, in conjunction with the UWI Seismic Research Centre, launched a regional campaign called **TSUNAMI SMART**<sup>5</sup> to raise awareness and encourage preparedness. The campaign was tailored for three distinct audiences: the general public, teachers and children.

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<sup>4</sup>The exercise should be carried out in a readiness style that aims to involve communication and decision making at Government levels, without disrupting or alarming the general public. Individual countries, however, may at their discretion elect to extend the exercise down to the level of actually notifying the public.

Regular Exercises are important for maintaining staff readiness for the real event. For the 2016 exercise Tsunamizone.org was used to register all participants (more than 330.000 in the Caribbean). Two exercises were simulated in Venezuela and in the Dominican Republic. Manuals, Exercises reports are available online to encourage initiatives from tsunamis-related organization to promote activities and evacuation drills. The next exercise is to be held on March 21, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> <http://weready.org/tsunami/>



### 3. Objectives

Many disasters can be averted and many lives and livelihoods can be saved with greater public awareness of the threats posed by natural hazards such as tsunamis. The objective of World Tsunami Awareness Day is, therefore, to raise public awareness of the deadly threat posed by tsunamis and share innovative approaches to reducing risk.

- Showcase good practices related to Tsunami readiness.
- Raise awareness at national and regional level for tsunami risk.
- Identify activities and priorities for upcoming World Tsunami Awareness Days – opportunities at regional, national and local level.

4

### 4. Expected Outcomes

- Awareness raised related to tsunami risk in the wider Caribbean region.
- Regional plan for the observation of upcoming World Tsunami Awareness Days (2017-2022) in the Caribbean.

### 5. Organization of the event

The Caribbean World Tsunami Awareness Day event will be organized in the afternoon of 20 October 2016 back-to-back to the Special Committee Meeting of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Transport of the Association of Caribbean States which will take place on 21 October 2016 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The organization team is composed by UNISDR, UNESCO/IOC, the ACS as well as CDEMA with the support by CEPREDENAC.

### 6. Invitees

Expected will be 40 participants composed of the following stakeholders:

- ACS member states representing the wider Caribbean region: Tsunami and Sendai/HFA focal points
- Representative from the Government of Japan
- Regional and United Nations organizations
- IGOs: CEPREDENAC, CDEMA, ACS

### 7. Media and outreach

Target audience for communication campaign: *Public at large, Governments, organizations and communities, Media*

#### Global Level

At the global level the following communication products will be produced and campaign applied:

- Banners, posters, flyer for the World Tsunami Awareness Day.
- Website: [www.unisdr.org/2016/tsunamiday](http://www.unisdr.org/2016/tsunamiday)
- Infograph and powerpoint.
- Public Service Announcement and Video message by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Social media campaign: #TsunamiDay2016 and #switch2sendai



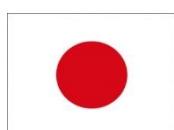
## Caribbean regional event on 20 October 2016

- Interviews will be conducted as input to the 10 min TV report on tsunami good practices in the Caribbean. The video will be broadcasted by the Caribbean Media Cooperation on 5 November 2016.
- Capture event by video and uploaded after the event.
- Present in opening ceremony PSA, SRSG message and tsunami song.

5

### 8. Agenda 20 October 2016

Time	Agenda item and speakers
13:30- 14:00	<p>Opening of the Caribbean World Tsunami Awareness Day  Master of Ceremony: <b>Humberto Jaime</b>, Communication and Information Officer, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>World Tsunami Awareness Day Public Service Announcement</i></li> <li>• <i>Video message by the United Nations Secretary-General Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mr. Robert Glasser</i></li> </ul> <p>Remarks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stephen Ramroop</b>, Director, Office for Disaster Preparedness and Management, Trinidad and Tobago</li> <li>• <b>Ronald Jackson</b>, Executive Secretary, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)</li> <li>• <b>Noel Barillas</b>, Advisor, Executive Secretariat of specialized institution of the Central American Integration System for Natural Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response (CEPREDENAC)</li> <li>• <b>Richard Blewitt</b>, Resident Coordinator, United Nations in Trinidad and Tobago</li> <li>• <b>Mitsuhiko Okada</b>, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago</li> <li>• <b>June Soomer</b>, Secretary General, Association of the Caribbean States (ACS)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tsunami song</li> </ul>
14:00- 14:15	Official Photo & Question and Answers by Media
14:15- 15:00	<p>Tsunami Readiness in the Caribbean region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Christa von Hillebrandt</b>, Chair, Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions</li> <li>• <b>Joan L. Latchman</b>, Seismologist, Seismic Research Center, University of the West Indies</li> </ul> <p>Questions and Answers</p>



15:00-16:00	<p>Tsunami readiness in the Caribbean region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Melissa Meade</b>, Director, Department of Disaster Management (DDM), Anguilla</li> <li>• <b>Danielle Skeete</b>, Programme Officer, Department of Disaster Management (DEM), Barbados</li> <li>• <b>Claricia Langley-Stevens</b>, Deputy Director, National Disaster Coordinator, National Emergency Management Agency</li> </ul> <p><i>Questions and Answers</i></p>
16:00-16:05	Saint Kitts and Nevis receives Tsunami Ready Certificate of Recognition
16:05-16:30	Coffee break
16:30-18:00	<p>World Tsunami Awareness Day – opportunity for the Caribbean region</p> <p><i>Working groups: Identify activities for upcoming WTADs – opportunities at regional, national and local level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Based on existing initiatives and experiences, what could be activities should be organized at regional, national or local level related to the World Tsunami Awareness Day?</i></li> <li>✓ <i>How can the coordination with other regions be ensured?</i></li> </ul> <p>Presentation of activities identified for upcoming World Tsunami Awareness Days</p>
18:00	Closing

## 9. Related Events

In order to encourage the tsunami awareness day activities at the national level, the UNESCO IOC Executive Secretary issued a circular letter to all Caribbean tsunami focal points (TNC, TWFP) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs about WTAD.

