



# Special Session for the World Tsunami Awareness Day



**2 November (Wednesday) 14:00 -17:00**

Banquet Hall (3rd floor), The Ashok, New Delhi  
(50-B, Diplomatic Enclave, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi – 110021 India)

## Objectives

### The session will:

- Connect the link between DRR community and Tsunami & Early Warning community
- Share experiences on tsunami disasters, preparedness, risk reduction and response, and identify lessons learned and good practices through presentations by tsunami experienced/prone countries and experts from both DRR and early warning, in particular along with the WTAD theme on "Live to Tell"
- Assess the current status and critical gaps of tsunami risk reduction, awareness and early warning in Asia
- Draw recommendations on how to address the identified gaps and challenges and to integrate tsunami risk in national DRR policies and strategies to reduce tsunami mortality

**WORLD  
TSUNAMI  
AWARENESS  
DAY**  
5 NOVEMBER  
2016



## Background

Tsunamis are rare. But they can be extremely deadly. In the past 100 years, more than 260,000 people have perished in 58 separate tsunamis. At an average of 4,600 deaths per disaster, the toll has surpassed any other natural hazard. Tsunamis know no borders, making international cooperation key for deeper political and public understanding of risk reduction measures.

The UN General Assembly has designated 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day and called on countries around the globe to mark it. Each edition of the annual day will be thematic : the focus in 2016 is "Live to Tell" to promote effective education and evacuation drills.

The UN General Assembly has tasked the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) with facilitating the observance of World Tsunami Awareness Day in collaboration with the rest of the United Nations System.

Considering the World Tsunami Awareness Day is at the closing day (5th November) of the 7th AMCDRR, it is opportune to have a Special Session dedicated to the tsunami DRR within the 7th AMCDRR, together with the commemoration of the World Tsunami Awareness Day on 5th November at the Closing Ceremony of the 7th AMCDRR.

## Collaborators:



14:00-14:30	<p><b>Opening</b></p> <p>Opening Remarks</p> <p><b>Ms. Kirsi Madi</b> Director, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)</p> <p>Presentation of short video on World Tsunami Awareness Day</p> <p>Special Messages regarding the establishment of the World Tsunami Awareness Day at UN General Assembly</p> <p><b>Mr. Toshihiro Nikai</b> Secretary-General of Liberal Democratic Party, Member of the House of Representatives, Japan</p>		<p><i>(4) Initiatives, data, measures to advance tsunami risk reduction as well as technical observations from the Seychelles event</i></p> <p><b>Prof. Fumihiko Imamura</b> Director, International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDeS), Tohoku University</p>
		15:30-15:40	<b>Break</b>
14:30-15:30	<p><b>Panel Discussion 1</b></p> <p><b>Evacuation Drills and SOPs in India and Seychelles</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Tony Elliott</b> Former Head of the Secretariat to the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWMS)</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><i>(1) The recently conducted tsunami evacuation drill in India in September</i></p> <p><b>Dr. S. Satheesh Chandra Sheno</b> Director, Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, Hyderabad, India</p> <p><i>(2) The recently conducted tsunami evacuation drill conducted in Seychelles in September</i></p> <p><b>Ms. Regina Prosper</b> Division of Risk and Disaster Management, the Government of Seychelles</p> <p><i>(3) Media perspective to the recently conducted tsunami evacuation drills in India as well as media roles for tsunami DRR</i></p> <p><b>Mr. Pallava Bagla</b> Science News Correspondent, NDTV, India</p>	15:40-16:30	<p><b>Panel Discussion 2</b></p> <p><b>Reducing tsunami mortality – lessons and good practices</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Laura S. L. Kong</b> Director, UNESCO/IOC–NOAA International Tsunami Information Center (ITIC)</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <p><i>(1) The 10-year progress of Tsunami Early Warning Systems since 2004</i></p> <p><b>Mr. Thorkild Aarup</b> Head of the IOC-UNESCO Tsunami Unit</p> <p><i>(2) Experiences, challenges, and progress in preparedness and DRR measures for future tsunami</i></p> <p><b>Mr. Yukimoto Ito</b> Vice Mayor of Sendai City, tsunami experienced local government representative</p>
		16:30-16:45	<b>Wrap up of the Panel Discussions</b>
		16:45-17:00	<b>Closing</b> Closing remarks by a high level representative (to be confirmed)

## Why November 5th for the World Tsunami Awareness Day?

“Inamura no Hi (the burning of rice sheaves)” is based on a historical event that took place during a massive tsunami disaster, resulting from the Ansei Nankai Earthquake on 5 November in 1854. The tsunami struck Hiromura, a little village on the Kii Peninsula in western Japan (present Hirokawa town, Wakayama Prefecture). After feeling the earthquake, Hamaguchi Goryo, a local leader in the village, anticipated that a big tsunami would come when he noticed the lowering of the tide and a rapid decrease in the level of well water. He guided his fellow villagers to evacuate to higher ground by setting fire to his precious sheaves of rice, his whole year’s harvest, as a signal of warning. From the hill top, the villagers saw the tsunami destroy their village. They understood that it was the fire that saved them. Hamaguchi Goryo’s deeds and story continued with his efforts to lay the groundwork for disaster preparedness among his community and to build the village back better than before. He implanted the seeds of prevention and preparedness amongst people to prepare for future disasters. Using his own money, he devoted to build a 5m high 600m long embankment, and to plant trees along the coast to mitigate future tsunami. This was a 4 year project which united the community, and was a key contributor to providing job opportunities for villagers whose livelihoods and homes were affected by the tsunami. Today, his spirit of disaster preparedness is passed on in efforts such as the accumulation and use of indigenous and local knowledge on disaster risk reduction, and the construction of seawalls against tsunami.

Messages from “Inamura-no-hi”

- Importance of early warning
- Use of the traditional, indigenous and local knowledge
- Importance of investing in DRR and “Build Back Better”

➔ **These elements are stipulated in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.**