

JOINT STATEMENT

International Round-Table Dialogue on Earthquake and Tsunami Risks in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea Region 27-28 April 2006, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Objectives of the Meeting:

1. To assess earthquake and tsunami and vulnerability in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea region
2. To review the level of preparedness and mitigation measures in place and identify gaps/weaknesses
3. To identify opportunities to strengthen regional and international partnerships, networking and capacity building

Attendees to this International Round-Table Dialogue on Earthquake and Tsunami Risks in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea Region represented the countries of the region, including Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, tsunami warning centre and disaster preparedness organizations of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), University of Hawaii Sea Level Center (UHSLC), and USA Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC), seismological and tsunami experts from Canada, Northern Ireland, Russian Federation, Turkey, and the USA, the IOC of UNESCO and its Tsunami Unit, the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/PTWS), the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWS), the GLOSS Group of Experts, and the International Tsunami Information Centre, and the private sector.

Over a period of one and a half days, Round-Table attendees shared information on the earthquake and tsunami hazards of Southeast Asia and the South China Sea, and the Indian Ocean, discussed the implications of the tsunami hazard on coastal communities and the ways in which to mitigate the earthquake and tsunami hazard in order to save lives and reduce property damage.

Background

In developing an Action Plan, the attendees recognize that arrangements for operation and establishment of international and regional tsunami warning systems are under the leadership of the IOC of UNESCO. IOC coordinates activities globally through tsunami warning and mitigation systems in the Indian Ocean (ICG/IOTWS), the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (ICG/CARIBE-EWS), and the northeastern Atlantic, Mediterranean, and connected seas (ICG/NEAMTWS), and the long-established ICG/PTWS.

Earthquake and tsunami hazards exist in the Indian Ocean, Andaman Sea, the Philippine Sea, Bohai Sea, East China Sea, South China Sea, Java Sea, Sulawesi [Celebes] Sea,

Mindanao Sea, and Sulu Sea. The tsunami travel times across these seas are, in many cases, on the order of only an hour or two and consequently require a dense network of instrumentation and real or near real time data;

In particular, the Twentieth Session of ICG/ITSU [now ICG/PTWS] in October 2005 recognized that the South China Sea region is vulnerable to destructive tsunamis and requested both the PTWC and the JMA provide interim tsunami advisory services for the South China Sea and develop a communication plan for the South China Sea.

Also, the ASEAN Task Force for Tsunami Early Warning identified seismic data (July 2005) and sea level data (April 2006) to be shared amongst Member States to enable the earliest of tsunami warnings.

In addition strong common links exist between the ICG/PTWS and other operational programmes of the IOC and WMO, including the Global Sea Level Observing System (GLOSS), the Global Telecommunication System (GTS), and the global Geostationary Meteorology Satellite System, operated by European Space Agency, the Japan Meteorological Agency, and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Action Plan

As a result of the Round-Table Dialogue, the following Action Plan was agreed upon:

1. Continue the significant progress on assessing earthquake and tsunami and vulnerability in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea region through the support of national and international research initiatives including historical and paleotsunami assessments.
2. Although substantial progress has been made in some countries with regard to tsunami preparedness and mitigation, there are still some gaps and weaknesses, and the countries within the region should continue efforts to address these shortcomings and to raise the general level of preparedness.
3. Build on the regional partnerships that have been developed and strengthen international partnerships through membership and active participation in ICG/PTWS and/or ICG/IOTWS.
4. Ensure long term sustainability by implementing an end-to-end framework in a multi-hazard context.
5. Urge ICG/PTWS to continue to focus on establishing regional TWS capabilities to cover the South China Sea region.
6. Countries in the region to improve sea level coverage in the South China Sea.
7. Promote the free and open exchange of real time seismic and sea level data and information to be used for national tsunami warning and event monitoring.
8. Southeast Asia and the South China Sea region should utilize or build on the PTWS, IOTWS and other existing organizations and institutions in order to achieve durability.

9. Request each country in the region to provide a 7x24 Tsunami Focal Point to the ICG/PTWS Secretariat, ITIC, to receive tsunami warnings issued by the JMA and PTWC.
10. Countries in the Southeast Asia and the South China Sea region should continue to improve their instrumentation and provide the resulting data and information in real time to PTWC and the JMA.
11. Request the ITIC continue to provide advice on the establishment of National Warning Systems, including especially public awareness and education.
12. Request the WMO and its Member National Meteorological Services continue to support the IOC through warning products and data exchange through its Global Telecommunications System (GTS), and to ensure that the GTS links are adequate for such purposes.
13. Urge capacity building organizations, such as ADPC, to continue their efforts in the region to reduce risk from all disasters, including tsunami.
14. Encourage participation in the PTWS Tsunami Exercise on May 17, 2006.
15. Recommend a follow-up meeting be held in a year's time to report on progress of this Action Plan.

The attendees expressed their appreciation to the Government of Malaysia through the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and UNESCO-IOC for convening and co-hosting the Round-Table Dialogue, and the Organization of Islamic Conference – Commission on Science and Technology, and the International Tsunami Information Centre for co-sponsoring the Dialogue.

The attendees also requested that the Malaysian National Contact to ICG/PTWS report on this meeting at the ICG/PTWS-XXI in Melbourne on 3-5 May, 2006.