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09/18/2019 - UNESCO Office in San José

## Strengthening of alert and response capabilities to tsunami and other coastal threats in Central America



During the days 17 and 18 September, the closing regional meeting of the project "Strengthening capacities for alert and response to tsunami and other coastal threats in Central America" was held in San José (Costa Rica), which has financing from the Directorate for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Action of the European Commission.

The general objective of the regional meeting is to strengthen the sub-regional system and national early warning systems for Tsunamis and other coastal threats, through interconnected strategies at the sub-regional, national and local levels.

Regarding the specific objectives, the meeting proposes:

- Present the achievements of the project.
- Socialize the regional communications protocol for the tsunami warning and the open source Central American mobile application for alert notification.
- Receive feedback from stakeholders as input for project evaluation.
- Define pending issues and needs as input for possible future joint activities of UNESCO and member countries, within the framework of tsunami early warning systems.

During these days, the national civil protection and / or risk management systems and scientific entities shared their standard operating procedures for tsunami action (SOPs), mayors and technical personnel from the partner municipalities shared their experiences on strengthening capabilities and simulation processes and tsunami drills and the results obtained in the workshops aimed at educational personnel in coastal communities of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama were presented.

On the other hand, the advances of the Central American mobile application for notification of tsunami alerts for key actors of the alert and response system were presented, which generates new communication opportunities in emergency contexts and constitutes an input for the coordination mechanisms of emergency present in the region.

The closing meeting coincides with the recognition of 6 Central American coastal communities as "Tsunami Ready": Omoa and Tornabé in Honduras, Corn Island and Bluefields in Nicaragua and La Libertad and Tamanique in El Salvador. The Tsunami Ready Accreditation is an international reconnaissance pilot, under the auspices of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, based on community performance. The initiative is modeled after the successful TsunamiReady® Program of the US NOAA National Weather



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Service. USA and verifies that the coastal municipalities are prepared for the eventuality of a tsunami.

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