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# Tsunami in Tonga underlines importance of investing in early warning systems

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The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mami Mizutori, today extended her condolences to all those affected by the volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga and

urged greater investment in early warning systems and resilient infrastructure, around the world.

"I send my heartfelt condolences to the people and government of Tonga where lives have been lost and major destruction has destroyed lives, homes, and livelihoods," said Ms. Mizutori.

"Information on the scale of the devastation is still limited, but what is known is the island state suffered extensive damage to its power and communication infrastructure. These disaster losses are not only hampering relief efforts but will have a long-term impact on the country's development.

"Tsunamis are rare events but can be extremely deadly. In the past 100 years, 58 of them have claimed more than 260,000 lives, or an average of 4,600 per disaster, surpassing any other natural hazard. The tsunami in Tonga underlines again the importance of investing in early warning systems and resilient infrastructure and increasing international cooperation to reduce tsunami risk. This need is especially acute among the least developed countries and Small Island Developing States.

"By the year 2030, an estimated 50 per cent of the world's population will live in coastal areas exposed to flooding, storms and tsunamis. Scaling up action to tackle tsunami risk through better preparedness and end-to-end early warning systems that reach all at-risk communities is critical to enabling early action before disaster strikes.

"I am encouraged by the reports of countries working together on issuing the tsunami warnings that stretched from Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific to Japan in North-East Asia and the USA and other countries in the Western Coast of the American Continent following the tsunami triggered by the volcanic eruption off Tonga. Furthermore, I welcome the initiative being taken by other countries including Thailand to review their early warning systems for tsunami risk. However, the cascading impacts of the Tonga tsunami, including an oil spill off the Peruvian coast, again demonstrate the need for multi-hazard approaches to manage a large range of disasters."

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## About UNDRR

UNDRR works closely with policymakers and partners to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 that charts the course towards reducing the risk posed by extreme events including tsunami risk.

In May, decisions makers will gather in Bali, Indonesia, for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction hosted by the Government of Indonesia and organised by the UN to discuss how to accelerate action on reducing these risks.

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