

**Recommendation ITSU-XX.3**

**PACIFIC-WIDE TSUNAMI EXERCISE**

The International Coordination Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific,

**Noting** that the December 26, 2004 tsunami tragedy in the Indian Ocean has brought to the attention of the world the urgent need to be more prepared for such events,

**Understanding** that simulating scenarios and learning lessons from such exercises is an effective way to improve preparedness,

**Recognizing** that the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific has weaknesses and can be improved,

**Acknowledging** that a Pacific-wide tsunami exercise has never been conducted,

**Recommends** that an end-to-end tsunami exercise be carried out for the Pacific Ocean during the second week of May, 2006, with a final report of results written before the next IOC Executive Council meeting in late June 2006.

**Further recommends** that a Task Team with the following Terms of Reference be formed to design and carry out the exercise:

- (i.) Membership of the Task Team for organizing the exercise should include representatives from PTWC, WC/ATWC, NWPTAC, and at least one representative from each quadrant of the Pacific.
- (ii.) The exercise should simulate each country being put into a warning situation requiring decision-making and be taken to the step just prior to public-notification.
- (iii.) The exercise will take place in two stages:
  - a. In the first stage, the scenario of a destructive tsunami crossing the Pacific will be simulated with notification by PTWC and other warning centers such as WC/ATWC and the NWPTAC to the designated contact points and national emergency authorities of the Member States responsible for tsunamis. This scenario may be compressed in time.
  - b. In the second stage, that should be conducted the same day or sometime within the following few days, decision-making and notification down to the last stage before public notification will be simulated. In this stage, notification to the emergency management authorities of a single coastal community is sufficient for simulating the end-to-end process of the entire Member State.
- (iv.) Member States be strongly encouraged to participate.
- (v.) Due care be taken so as not to inadvertently alarm the public. A most conservative approach may be best considering this will be the first such Pacific-wide exercise.

- (vi.) Member States should share information about past National or Sub-National tsunami exercises prior to this exercise.
- (vii.) Participating Member States be required to share information regarding the procedures applied and lessons learned during the exercise.
- (viii.) The details of the exercise as well as its set of outcomes and performance measures be defined in advance, taking into consideration when possible the results of the Member State assessments. Outcomes and performance measures should be collected using a standard instrument and at a minimum include:
  - a. How each Member State received the warning (e.g., GTS, fax, email)
  - b. Elapsed time between when the bulletin is issued and when it is received and recognized
  - c. What assessment tools are applied for decision-making about evacuations
  - d. How the public would be notified and instructed
  - e. Elapsed time until public would be notified and instructed
  - f. Summary of each Member State's National Emergency Plan for tsunamis including any chapters on exercises
  - g. Feedback from stakeholders regarding their performance and the performance of the information providers
  - h. Media response
- (ix.) ITSU National Contacts will be responsible for collecting results of their Member State and providing them to the Task Team by June 1, 2006.
- (x.) A formal letter announcing the exercise and providing its details should be composed by the Task Team and sent by the IOC as soon as possible to the highest possible contact within the emergency management structure of each Member State to help facilitate its participation.
- (xi.) The exercise should not be considered as a one-time event but as the first exercise in a pattern of recurring exercises that take place once each year or once each intersessional period.

**Requests** that resources be made available from the IOC and Member States to facilitate organizational and follow-up meetings, and a contractor to help facilitate the debriefing process and quickly assemble the report.