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Eighth Pacific Tsunami Drill set for September to November 2018

20 September 2018

Over 40 countries around the Pacific Rim will participate in a mock tsunami scenario from September to November 2018. The purpose of this exercise is to test country tsunami decision-making procedures and communication systems and processes.

“The events of the 2009 Samoa Islands Region, 2010 Chile, 2011 Japan, and the February 2013 Solomon Islands tsunamis have increased our need to be more prepared for such events,” said Dr Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. “This important exercise will validate the enhanced products for future official use by countries of the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System.

The exercise, entitled Exercise Pacific Wave 2018 (PacWave18), will simulate Pacific countries in a Tsunami Warning situation requiring government decision-making and community action, essentially all aspects of the Disaster Risk Reduction cycle. It is the eighth such exercise with the first in May 2006 and the most recent in February 2017. PacWave has been a regular part of the IOC's Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (PTWS) since 2006, recalled Lieutenant Commander Carlos Zuniga, in charge of the Chilean Tsunami Warning System Center. .

It will also provide an opportunity for those countries that receive tools from the Northwest Pacific Tsunami Advisory Center (NWPTAC) in Japan and the South China Sea Tsunami Advisory Center (SCSTAC) in China to test these new products, including tsunami wave forecasts that will allow each country to better assess its own tsunami threat. Additionally, the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System will conduct a live communication test from its Tsunami Service Providers (PTWC, NWPTAC, SCSTAC) to countries on 5 November 2018, World Tsunami Awareness Day.

Participating countries will select from seven different Pacific scenarios based on real events from the past and conduct at least a Tabletop Exercise within the period of September to November. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii, NWPTAC in Japan, and the SCSTAC in China will send simulated warnings, which will trigger a country's tsunami response. These responses will be evaluated by experts in each country.

For instance:

- American Samoa and Samoa will test their communications on September 21, 2018.
- New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna, both French overseas territories, will conduct a joint response exercise on October 8, 2018.
- Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Perú will jointly test their standard operating procedures on October 24, 2018.

For these four countries, evacuation drills will be triggered by a far field earthquake, which generates tsunami waves that travel across the Pacific affecting the entire South American coast of the Pacific.

About 76% of the world's deadly tsunami occurrences take place in the Pacific Ocean and connected seas. On average, one destructive local tsunami occurs in the region every year or two while a Pacific Ocean-wide tsunami has hit the region several times per century. Five deadly tsunamis have hit the region over the past eight years: Samoa and Tonga were hit in 2009, Chile in 2010 and 2015, Japan in 2011 and the Solomon Islands in 2013.

The exercise is sponsored by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission through its Intergovernmental Coordination Group of the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/PTWS).

Participating Countries:

Australia	Fiji	Papua New Guinea
Brunei Darussalam	France	Peru
Cambodia	Guatemala	Philippines
Canada	Honduras	Republic of Korea (South)
Chile	Indonesia	Russian Federation
China	Japan	Samoa
Colombia	Kiribati	Singapore
Cook Islands	Malaysia	Solomon Islands
Costa Rica	Marshall Islands(Kwajalein, Majuro)	Thailand
Democratic Republic of Korea(North Korea)	Mexico	Tokelau
Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste(East Timor)	Nauru	Tonga
Ecuador	New Zealand	Tuvalu
El Salvador	Nicaragua	United Kingdom (Pitcairn Islands)
Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap)	Niue	United States
	Palau	Vanuatu
	Panama	Vietnam

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(http://itic.ioc-unesco.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=1150&Itemid=1150)

Exercise Pacific Wave 2018 information site: <http://www.pacwave.info> (<http://www.pacwave.info>)

Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System:

http://www.ioc-tsunami.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11&Itemid=12&lang=en (http://www.ioc-tsunami.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11&Itemid=12&lang=en)

Pacific Tsunami Warning Center: <http://www.tsunami.gov> (<http://www.tsunami.gov>)

Northwest Pacific Tsunami Advisory Center: <http://www.data.jma.go.jp/svd/eqev/data/nwptac/index.html>
(<http://www.data.jma.go.jp/svd/eqev/data/nwptac/index.html>)

South China Sea Tsunami Advisory Center: <http://www.scstac.org> (<http://www.scstac.org>)



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