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# Pacific Rim countries test their tsunami preparedness

**On 9 - 10 November, some 30 Pacific Rim countries will take part in a tsunami warning exercise, PacWave11, organized under the aegis of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). The test is destined to help governmental authorities in the countries involved prepare for major tsunami events.**

In the first phase, the exercise will consist of ten different scenarios to allow each participating country to respond to a regional or local tsunami following a powerful earthquake off the shores of Russia, Ryukyu Islands, west and east of the Philippines, Vanuatu, Tonga, Chile, Ecuador, Central America, and Aleutian Islands. Countries engaged in the test will choose one of these scenarios and opt for a regional or local event to which they would have to react.

During a second phase, implemented simultaneously after receipt of warning messages, the authorities of the countries involved will test all the necessary steps to respond to a warning prior to alerting the public.

Simulated warnings will be sent by the Northwest Pacific Tsunami Advisory Centre (Japan), the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (USA), and West Coast/Alaska Tsunami Warning Center (USA). They will be addressed to the focal points of each country called upon to respond to a tsunami warning.

The exercise will further improve countries' ability to respond to an alert and improve regional coordination in the event of a tsunami.

UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission established an International Coordination Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific in 1965, following the major tsunami of 1960 that hit the coast of Chile and claimed close to 5,000 human lives. The purpose of the Group is to coordinate the ongoing development and enhancement of the Pacific Tsunami Warning Systems and to promote the establishment of national risk assessments, alert and response programmes.

Most tsunamis occur in the Pacific Ocean and connected seas. Three tsunamis have struck that region recently: Samoa (2009), Chile (2010) and Japan in 2011.

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04.11.2011

Source: UNESCOPRESS

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