

## Working together with UNESCO Intergovernmental Coordination Group



Feedback

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Professors Dilanthi Amaratunga and Richard Haigh from the Global Disaster Resilience Centre at the University of Huddersfield have become formally involved in the Risk Assessment and Management Team of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWS). The project, funded by UNESCAP, is entitled *Enhancing Tsunami Risk Assessment and Management, Strengthening Policy Support and Developing Guidelines for Tsunami Exercises in Indian Ocean Countries*.

A key activity of the project is to conduct a regional workshop on *Coastal Hazards and Tsunami Risk Assessment and Management*, which is based on the *IOC Guidelines on Tsunami Risk Assessment and Mitigation for the Indian Ocean*. The guidelines are being revised and updated as part of the project.

A design and planning workshop for the project is being held at the University of Moratuwa, Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 29 September – 1 October 2014. As members of the Task Team for the Risk Assessment component, Dilanthi & Richard will be developing training modules and materials for the regional workshop.

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO is a regional focal point of the IOC to coordinate and facilitate the development and implementation of oceanographic science programs and initiatives, as relevant to the balanced strategic and tactical scientific priorities. The IOC aids and advises policy makers and managers in the reduction of risks from tsunamis, storm surges, Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and other coastal hazards by focusing on implementing adaptation measures to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities, their infrastructure and service-providing ecosystems. UNESCO-IOC is leading a global effort to establish ocean-based tsunami warning systems as part of an overall multi-hazard disaster reduction strategy. The IOC Tsunami Unit works with Member States, together

with other UN agencies and NGOs, to build sustainable tsunami early warning systems. The Unit's mission is to ensure appropriate design and development of tsunami warning systems and to ultimately provide adequate protection at local, regional, and global scales. Following the undersea earthquake on 26 December 2004 and the subsequent strongest tsunami in living memory, IOC took the lead in coordinating activities and immediate action to establish a Tsunami Warning System (TWS) in the Indian Ocean. The response included the establishment of an interim Tsunami Warning System while the interim Tsunami Advisory Information is provided through the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii and the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA).

Further details on UNESCO IOC programme can be found at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/ioc-oceans/>

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