

# Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific

## Master Plan

UNESCO



Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

# **ITSU Master Plan**

**Second Edition  
April 1999**

Revised from the December 1989 Edition

The International Coordination Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific (ICG/ITSU), of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, is composed of Member States from all parts of the Pacific region. The purpose of ICG/ITSU is to provide or improve all aspects of tsunami mitigation in the Pacific including hazard assessment, warnings, preparedness, and research through a system of international cooperation and coordination of activities. This document, the second edition of the Tsunami Warning System Master Plan, gives a brief overview of tsunamis and the tsunami hazard in the Pacific. In the context of that information, it provides a description of the current status of the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific with an identification of its limitations, and presents the views of the ICG/ITSU on corresponding directions for progress.

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Formulation of the Master Plan began in Fiji in 1982 during the Eighth Meeting of the International Coordination Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific (ICG/ITSU). At that meeting Resolution VIII.1 was passed which, among other things, requested the IOC Secretariat "to provide support to the preparation, publication, and distribution of a Master Plan". This support was forthcoming and a document "Tsunami - Where Next?" was prepared and accepted at ITSU IX in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1984 as a document preliminary to the Master Plan. ITSU Resolution IX.1 recommended completion of the Master Plan with "a view to adopt the Master Plan at the Tenth Session". At ITSU X held in Sidney, B.C., Canada, in 1985, the draft Master Plan was reviewed, but it was not approved in its final form until ITSU XI held in Beijing in 1987. This first edition of the Master Plan was prepared by G.C. Dohler, former Chairman of ITSU, in cooperation with the IOC Secretariat, the Director of the International Tsunami Information Center, the Chairman of ITSU, and from comments provided by the National Contacts of the ITSU Member States. The first edition, Doc. IOC / Inf-730, was released on 23 December 1989.

At ITSU XV held in Papeete, French Polynesia, in 1995, in consideration of recent technological improvements to the system and increased scientific understanding of the tsunami's nature, the meeting requested the Master Plan be updated and an Editorial Group was established to implement that request. A draft of the second edition was prepared for ITSU XVI held in Lima, Peru for the Member States comments and revisions. Based on their subsequent input, this second edition of the Master Plan was finalized.

The Master Plan for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific is designed as a long-term guide for improvement of the Tsunami Warning System based on the analysis of existing components of the system. Since 1987, technological innovations such as enhanced communication networks, improved seismic analysis techniques, and low-cost, high-power desktop computers have added greatly to the expectation that improvements recommended in the Plan can be realized for the benefit of the Member States. It is understood that technological enhancements to the Warning System, as real as the benefits can be, require financial assistance and a plan of action that can gain and maintain Member State support for successful implementation.

In addressing the current operational limitations of the present Tsunami Warning System, the Master Plan specifically recognizes a number of areas requiring improvement. By defining the basic elements of the Tsunami Warning System and the required improvements, the Plan continues as a useful, living document that can be modified and revised to capture benefits associated with technological improvements, undiscovered funding opportunities, and collaboration amongst Member States.

## CONTENTS

ITSU HISTORY AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE .....	1
TSUNAMIS AND THE TSUNAMI HAZARD .....	3
Local and Regional Tsunamis .....	3
Pacific-Wide or Distant Tsunamis .....	4
Characteristics of the Tsunami Phenomena .....	5
CURRENT STATUS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS .....	7
Hazard Assessment .....	7
<i>Historical Tsunami Data</i> .....	7
<i>Paleotsunami Data</i> .....	9
<i>Post-Tsunami Surveys</i> .....	9
<i>Numerical Modeling</i> .....	9
Warning .....	11
<i>Warning Systems and Centers</i> .....	11
<i>The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center</i> .....	11
<i>The West Coast / Alaska Tsunami Warning Center</i> .....	12
<i>The Japanese Tsunami Warning Centers</i> .....	13
<i>The Russian Federation Tsunami Warning Centers</i> .....	14
<i>The Polynesian Tsunami Warning Center</i> .....	14
<i>The National Tsunami Warning System of Chile</i> .....	15
<i>Other National Tsunami Warning Systems</i> .....	15
<i>Data</i> .....	17
<i>Seismic Data</i> .....	17
<i>Water Level Data</i> .....	19
<i>Historical Tsunami and Earthquake Data</i> .....	22
<i>Numerical Model Data</i> .....	22
<i>Other Data</i> .....	22
<i>Communications</i> .....	23
<i>Real Time Access to Data</i> .....	23
<i>Dissemination of Messages</i> .....	23
Preparedness .....	24
<i>Evacuation</i> .....	24
<i>Evacuations for Local Tsunamis</i> .....	24
<i>Evacuations for Distant Tsunamis</i> .....	25
<i>Education</i> .....	25
<i>Public Education</i> .....	25
<i>Education for Warning System Operators, Emergency Managers,</i> <i>and Policy Makers</i> .....	26
<i>Land Use</i> .....	27
<i>Engineering</i> .....	27
Research .....	28
<i>Structure</i> .....	28
<i>Areas for Research</i> .....	28
<i>Recent Research Applications</i> .....	30
CONCLUSIONS .....	32
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	33
<i>List of Acronyms</i> .....	34