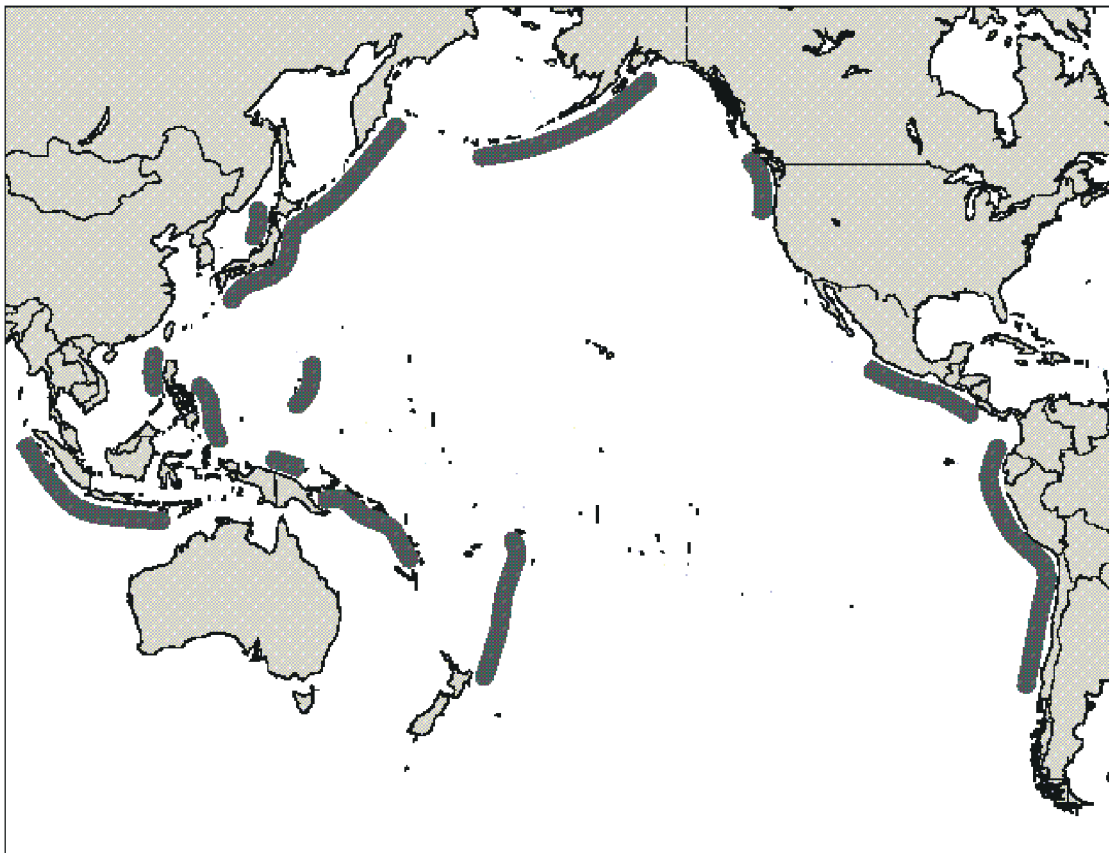


## ITSU HISTORY AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

During the Third Session of the **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)**, in June of 1964, the Commission requested the Secretariat of the IOC to arrange for the convening of a meeting, preferably in Honolulu in early 1965, to discuss the international aspects of the tsunami warning system with a view towards securing the best possible international cooperation in all phases of the tsunami warning system, such as: tidal and seismic monitoring stations, internal and international communications, and the issuance and dissemination of warnings. Invitations were extended to all IOC Member States with interests

in the Pacific, with specific invitations to the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Japan Meteorological Agency, the Hydrometeorological Service of the USSR, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Tsunami Committee of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), the International Telecommunications Union, and other such national or international bodies which may express interest.



*Major tsunamigenic seismic zones in the Pacific region. Most tsunamis are only destructive along coasts near the generating earthquake. However, a few each century are powerful enough to cause destruction many thousands of kilometers away from the source.*

A working group on the international aspects of the **Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific (TWSP)** met in accordance with the IOC's request during the month of April, 1965, at Honolulu. The group discussed IOC Resolution III.8, its implications for the benefit of the Member States, and the actions required to provide, on an international basis, timely tsunami warnings. As a result, the **International Coordination Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific (ICG/ITSU, or ITSU)** was formed, composed of Member States in the Pacific region. Its purpose is to recommend and coordinate programs most beneficial to countries belonging to the IOC whose coastal areas are threatened by tsunamis. To implement its objectives and ensure the success of the international tsunami warning project, the Group holds sessions about every two years at the invitation of an ITSU Member State and at a location within the Pacific Basin. These meetings provide an opportunity to further cooperation and coordination between the Member States, review activities of the Group since the last meeting, and set the program for the Group for the next period.

Simultaneous with the formation of ITSU, the IOC accepted the offer of the United States of America to expand its existing tsunami warning center in Hawaii, now known as the **Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC)**, to become the operational headquarters of the TWSP. And it accepted the offer of the other Member States to integrate their existing facilities and communications into the TWSP.

In addition, the IOC established the **International Tsunami Information Center (ITIC)** located in Honolulu, Hawaii and hosted by the USA, in support of ITSU and the TWSP. The mandate of ITIC, revised by ITSU in 1977, has six elements which are briefly: 1) to monitor and recommend improvements to the warning system, 2) to bring to Member and non-Member States information about activities of the warning system, ITIC, and ITSU, 3) to assist in the establishment of national tsunami warning systems in the Pacific region, 4) to gather and distribute knowledge on tsunamis and foster tsunami research and its application, 5) to help make available all records pertaining to tsunamis, and 6) to assist with and develop procedures for post-tsunami surveys.

