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UNESCO-IOCIntergovernmental Coordination Group for the North-Eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and Connected Seas Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/NEAMTWS)

**Steering Committee Meeting**

**13th May 2024 (Online)**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

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# OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Alessandro Amato, the new Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the North-Eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and Connected Seas Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/NEAMTWS), opened the Steering Committee (SC) meeting on 13 May 2024 at 10:00 (CET) and welcomed the Group.

The Chairperson then introduced the provisional agenda which is different from usual SC meeting.

Mr Denis Chang Seng, ICG/NEAMTWS Technical Secretary highlighted that the SC meeting this time focused on specific topics following the ICG/NEAMTWS XVIII session only three months ago.

The Group adopted the provisional agenda.

The Chairperson welcomed the new UNESCO-IOC intern, Litanya Octonovrilna, who is currently doing a PhD in O.K., and thanked the previous chairperson, Ms Maria-Ana Baptista, and the ICG/NEAMTWS Secretariat for their support

He invited Mr. Ignacio Aguirre Ayerbe, vice-chairperson to co-address the SC. The chair and the vice-chair, Mr. Ignacio Aguirre Ayerbe, highlighted the exciting period ahead, focusing on strengthening the NEAMTWS governance and cooperation in the region

The ICG/NEAMTWS Technical Secretary informed the SC that Prof Hamouda, vice-chairperson was unable to participate as he is attending a GOOS-Africa meeting in Côte D’Ivoire.

# TSUNAMI READY AND SUPPORT TOOLS

***Update on TRRP, TR Toolkit and NEAMTIC:***

Mr Denis Chang Seng, ICG/NEAMTWS Technical Secretary, reported on the upcoming Tsunami Ready ceremonies and planning on TRR Application. He also presented an update on Tsunami Ready and support tools, emphasizing significant work completed within the NEAMTIC/CoastWAVE project and NEAMTWS, including:

* TICs meeting in the margin of TOWS-WG TTs meetings.
* TICs representatives involved in planning and organizing the 2nd Global Tsunami Symposium, Indonesia.
* Development of a new website and common TICs platform.
* Regional SOP training.
* Publication of 30 articles, 10 brochures, and 10 videos.
* Contributions to ITIC with Tsunami Ready brochures and a forthcoming Stromboli volcano tsunami early warning system video.

He underlined NEAMTIC capacity building and training role and the ongoing development concerning new Tsunami Website and TICs platforms. Secretariat is coordinating NEAM contributions to the TSR eyewitness and survivor project. An expert and two eyewitnesses from NEAM have been nominated to participate in the 57 IOC Executive Council special event on 27th June 2024.

He reminded the SC that there were several calls at previous IOC Governing Body meetings to support NEAMTIC development, however no support has been offered to this end.

Ms. Maria Ana Baptista and the Chairperson emphasized the importance of better understanding the Tsunami Ready (TR) documentation and recommended that it be made available in different languages. There is also a need to better involve the Task Team on Tsunami Ready in preparation of TR application forms.

[*NB: - As of May, it was decided that the Secretariat will handle all matters related to the TRR application. It is not within the mandate of TT TR to be involved in handling application and evaluation as per internal IOC Workflow]*

The Technical Secretary noted that the Inter ICG Task Team on Disaster Management and Preparedness (TOWS WG - TT DMP) in February 2024 requested the IOC, led by the TICs, to develop and share a Tsunami Ready Toolkit to assist Member States in implementing the Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme. The toolkit can include a standard and clear procedure, format, and method for submitting the Tsunami Ready application and its supporting documentation. TT DMP also requested the Secretariat to inform Member States on the Toolkit’s availability via IOC Circular Letter to the Tsunami National Contacts, National Tsunami Ready Board, and widely through attaching this as an appendix of the Manual and Guide 74

Three TICs meetings have been organized to discuss the content and format of the new TIC pages, key action items e.g. Toolkit’s and the preparation of the IOC Circular Letter. The TR website is expected to be completed and published by June 2024.

***Tsunami ISO Standards:***

Mr Ignacio Aguirre Ayerbe, Vice-chairperson reported on the new Tsunami ISO standards led by BMKG, Indonesia in addressing risk assessment, communication, and dissemination. He mentioned that ISO is complementary to the Tsunami Ready Indicators. The ISO of a Community-Based Tsunami Early Warning System is a practical instrument to be referred to by the Private Sector, as well as cities prone to tsunami to develop the Tsunami Early Warning System as a part of Tsunami Ready Community program. The ISO 22328-3 includes guidelines for conducting (1) Risk Assessment; (2) Dissemination and Communication of Knowledge; (3) Monitoring and Warning Services; (4) Improving response Capability; and (5) Commitment of the authority and the community at risk to the sustainability of the tsunami early warning system.

Mr. Marinos Charampalakis raised concerns about the costs and implementation of these standards.

The Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, and the Technical Secretary suggested further discussions and specific meetings to delve deeper into the ISO framework.

# TSUNAMI EXERCISE

***Update on NEAMWave 23 Evaluation Report***

The co-chair of the Task Team on Tsunami Exercise Ms Ceren Ozer Sozdinler provided an update of the NEAMWAVE exercise, highlighting increased participation with the inclusion of the CoastWAVE project partners at the local levels and the need for improved online evaluation forms.

The Technical Secretary supported the need to explore the Public Warning Systems of the Galileo Emergency Warning Satellite Service (EWSS) in the context of next NEAMWave exercise in CoastWAVE 2.0 project communities where possible.

# DOCUMENTATION

***Update on Operational User Guide and GSDD Directive***

The Task Team on Documentation chairperson provided an update on the Operational User Guide, with section leaders providing brief updates on its progress.

Key actions that have been completed:

* + OUG authors and section leaders have been identified and confirmed.
  + A meeting with proposed OUG section leaders was held online on the 5th of March. Meeting discussion points and an updated OUG structure were shared with the section leaders.
  + Following the meeting, section leaders have organized separate coordination meetings.

Ms. Cecilia Valbonesi presented a proposition for a draft European Tsunami directive, based on the EC Floods Directive, asking for member contributions and noting the importance of local compliance.

The vice-chairperson, Mr. Ignacio Aguirre Ayerbe, supported the directive and highlighted a general need for support/funding for tsunami risk management and its integration into national frameworks.

The Technical Secretary suggested the need to have proper engagement on the matter as it may have important implications to ICG/NEAMTWS Member States.

***GSDD Revision***

The Technical Secretary informed the meeting that there was no further exchange on the GSDD Revision since leaving the TOWS meeting in Sendai, Japan in February. Mr Rick Bailey. Technical Secretary of TOWS TT Tsunami Watch Operations has not communicated on the matter yet. The Technical Secretary will follow up on the matter.

***ICG/NEAMTWS XVIII Summary Report and Other Doc***

The Technical Secretary reported that the [ICG/NEAMTWS XVIII Summary Report](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389721) is now published and now available for the 57 session of IOC Executive Council Meeting as a working document.

# NEW CHALLENGES

The Chairperson emphasized the need for more involvement of the SC in CoastWAVE project and highlighted the importance of aligning efforts to engage countries effectively. He recommended involving the SC from the preparation stage to improve coordination.

Mr. Marinos Charampalakis highlighted the need to clarify roles of members within CoastWAVE 2.0 and the Tsunami Ready initiative. He stressed the importance of defining the responsibilities of members of NEAMTWS.

The Technical Secretary clarified that UNESCO/ IOC TSR/ Secretariat by principle, norm and procedure does not have to consult members of ICG/NEAMTWS SC when preparing and submitting such TSR project proposals. This is not an uncommon practice at IOC and or UNESCO as far as he is aware. However, the Secretariat may decide to consult and request technical advice on such matters from members of ICG/NEAMTWS and its SC where relevant and needed when preparing TSR project proposals. If time allows, the Secretariat may seek comments and feedback on the draft proposal before submission. This time, there was really no time to share the draft proposal as DG-ECHO requested the proposal ASAP, otherwise, the opportunity may have been lost to secure project funds.

He noted that the CoastWAVE 2.0 Information Meeting was organized on 15th May and all the SC members were invited to participate with the aim of providing comments and advise before implementation. He mentioned that he will provide further details regarding coordination and involvement of SC members / WGs and TTs in CoastWAVE 2.0.

***New ToR for Non-Seismic Tsunami and planned activities***

The co-chairs of Task Team non-seismic tsunami reported on the new and ongoing work of the group. The membership of the group remains to be completed. The Technical Secretary recommended that the membership of TT non-seismic tsunami should include volcano and other non -seismic tsunami experts.

***Monitoring sea level status in NEAM region***

Dr Denis Chang Seng, Technical Secretary delivered a presentation on: *Towards a Strategic Implementation Plan? Sea Level Monitoring Network for NEAMTWS*. He highlighted the strategic objectives of the ICG/NEAMTWS 2030 Strategy on sea level. He then provided key implementation steps which included:

1. Evaluation/ Assessment of sea level network for NEAMTWS.
2. Setting Targets: Optimal SL Network Design? How to do this assessment? What is needed?
3. Transition Plan: Building on JRC IDSL Experimental Technology.
4. Combining Resources and Efforts: IOC GLOSS (NORMAD Initiative): N-Africa
5. New Investments (Member States).
6. Organisation and Planning. He suggested WG2/3 and Secretariat organize two meetings per year and make stronger connections with other initiatives.

# GOVERNANCE

The Chairperson discussed the need to reorganize Working Groups and Task Teams to better align with NEAM’s three strategic pillars.

Mr. Fernando Carrilho recalled the earlier efforts in the reorganization of the NEAM structure some years ago.

Mr Ignacio Aguirre Ayerbe, vice-chairperson suggested proposing governance changes for approval at the next ICG meeting.

The Technical Secretary emphasized the need for strategic visioning first based on NEAMTWS 2030 Strategy before proceeding to Governance changes/reorganization. He noted that as such conversations in the past have unfortunately not been fruitful, and there are many urgent activities and priorities to address.

In addition, he underlined that the role of ICG/NEAMTWS Officers is not clearly defined, as in other ICGs and IOC Programmes, aside to what is stated in UNESCO Rules of Procedures, however Chairpersons naturally have a key role in preparing meeting agendas with the Secretariat, chairing ICG related meetings, as well as providing advice and or provide certain decisions at the request of the Secretariat and TSR. He noted that the style of chairmanship/leadership varies from person to person, however there are best practices and experiences to draw on to ensure the success of ICG/NEAMTWS.

The Chairperson recommended that there is a need to develop a document to guide the SC. The document should include the roles and should focus on priorities.

The Technical Secretary and the Chairperson agreed on the necessity to involve more CPA representatives in Task Teams and Working Groups.

Overall, the Group agreed there is a need to review the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the SC.

# OCEAN DECADE AND PROJECT ACTIONS

The vice -chairperson emphasized the need for more information to enhance actions related to the Ocean Decade.

The Technical Secretary reported that since January 2024, he is the Focal Point for the TSR on Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme with respect to the Ocean Decade Unit and related matters. For example, he supported the ODTP-SC committee on matters related to the Ocean Decade and has informed respective ICGs / Technical Secretariat regarding Ocean Decade Developments and Action Calls. He encouraged experts to submit actions to be considered for endorsement by the Decade Coordination Unit as contributions to challenge 6: Increase community resilience to ocean hazard. He highlighted that he has already submitted CoastWAVE 2.0 as an Ocean Decade Action.

**Update on CoastWAVE Project**

Ms. Derya Vennin, CoastWAVE project coordinator reported on the remaining project activities, the timeline and the upcoming project final meeting in Alexandria, Egypt between 27-28 May 2024 and upcoming TR Recognition Ceremony for Alexandria.

***IDSL Survey and Results***

Ms. Vennin reported that a consultant has analyzed the survey distributed to the local IDSLs operators to assess the overall satisfaction of IDSL. The satisfaction levels of the local operators are identified as:

* Very satisfied: 17%
* Somewhat satisfied: 58%
* Dissatisfied: 25%

The IDSL assessment report points out that the devices need constant repair and spare parts. The report does not specify the exact reasons for dissatisfaction of IDSL, indicating the need for further investigation into the issues affecting the users. The overall summary of the IDSL survey evaluation shows:

* Parts such as sensors, memory cards, and control boxes require constant repairs.
* Lack of robustness and endurance of the stations.
* Challenges to perform maintenance and the need to find other ways to remotely fix or do troubleshooting.
* Lack of a user guide that explains how to best conduct maintenance and operate the stations.

The Technical Secretary informed the group that a complete report will be presented by the consultant at the final CoastWAVE meeting in Alexandria, Egypt.

***Multi-hazard Risk Perception Study***

The CoastWAVE project coordinator then presented the key points and recommendations of the sea level related risk perception study which was carried out in all project countries at the community level.

Overall recommendations are as follows:

* Authorities or relevant organisations should launch or enhance public awareness campaigns to provide accurate information about tsunamis. Employing various channels such as social media, TV, radio, and posters can reach a broad audience.
* Conducting workshops and educational sessions in schools and local communities to teach people about tsunamis, their causes, warning signs, and appropriate response actions will help prepare them better for the impact of the disaster.
* Warning authorities should communicate about the existing alerting systems.
* Educators or relevant authorities should educate the coastal population on self-preparedness. They should provide information on creating a tsunami go-bag, for instance, and encourage individuals not to rely solely on sirens but also to follow natural signs and other self-preparedness measures, enabling individuals to take an active role in their safety during emergencies.
* Local stakeholders should organise evacuation exercises tailored explicitly for dependent individuals.
* Municipalities should allocate more resources to invest in sirens or similar alerting technologies to warn their communities. This investment will also build trust within the younger generation regarding the municipality/city's institutional capacity to address sea-level hazards and risks.

**Coastwave Final Tasks and Progress**

The CoastWAVE project coordinator also presented a project progress summary for the last 3 months.

1. Local partners have been identified to operate and maintain the siren systems.
2. Site surveys were conducted by the local operators to identify optimum locations for the siren systems.
3. A total of 10 sirens were procured: El Jadida (2), Alexandria (3), Chipiona (2) and Cyprus (3).

***CoastWAVE 2.0***

The Technical Secretary reported on the preparation activities and upcoming meetings concerning CoastWAVE 2.0. The new project will start on 1 July 2024. The project will target existing project countries Egypt, Greece, Morocco, Spain, Türkiye, as well as new countries including France, Italy and Portugal. Information meeting was organized prior to the SC meeting for all ICG/NEAMTWS TWFP/TNCs and SC members.

He emphasized that the approved project points out that the Project Steering Committee (PSC) will provide strategic guidance, undertake review of project outputs, regularly oversee progress, provide advice and strategic direction.

The PSC proposed members as per approved project representative of DG ECHO, ICG/NEAMTWS Chairperson, co-chairperson of WGs and TTs. However, he suggested that it would be optimal to consider only one co-chair from each WG and TTs on a rotational basis if needed.

Concerning the Hazard Assessment, Evacuation Mapping and Planning training, the Technical Secretary added that the project intends to replicate the experience in Cyprus with the involvement of key organizations. Consultant with preference from NEAM region may be recruited to conduct and facilitate the training. However, it was emphasized that the training to be conducted will include both deterministic and probabilistic tsunami hazard assessments and mapping to ensure trainees learn and improve skills and capacities on both techniques and methods. Project countries will then decide which method they prefer to implement based on several other factors. It remains unclear how to conduct the training in the case of PTHA given the level of resources and infrastructure needed.

The meeting pointed to the existence of an already existing PTHA assessment ( TSUMAPS-NEAM) which is also described in NEAMTWS 2030 Strategy, as a first basic layer of information for a country or a municipality willing to define inundation and evacuation zones.

In other words, one local authority can decide to use it without the need of computing high resolution PTHA. I think this is something we should offer as a viable path to define the tsunami hazard zones. The role of the local authorities is to engage with some of the CW2 staff-experts to choose the best ARP/percentiles to be less or more "safe" (IMHO it is more effective than a strict deterministic approach).

The meeting seemingly did not have a clear agreement concerning the tsunami hazard assessment approach, and how the SC members are involved in the CoastWAVE project. However, the Technical Secretary re-emphasized that the proposed PSC is indeed an optimal structure and mechanism to engage relevant ICG/NEAMTWS, WGs and TTs co-chairpersons, and there is really no need to include all SC members on the PSC. In fact, the project will consult very closely with relevant WG and TT members on different relevant project activities. E.g. consulting WG 1 on tsunami hazard assessment. He stressed that it is important to avoid setting up a big committee to ensure the project is implemented effectively and on time. He iterated that the PSC role is to advise and make recommendations to the PSC, however the Project Team and Project countries will make final decisions on how best to implement activities based on national and local circumstances and other factors.

The Vice-chairperson pointed out that the CoastWAVE 2.0 project is ambitious with a very tight budget and duration of implementation. He also suggested that the Officers shall be informed of the meetings of the Technical Secretariat with the WGs and TTs.

# OTHER GLOBAL INITIATIVES

The Technical Secretary reported on the recent developments concerning the Early Warning For All Initiative- (EW4ALL) led by WMO and the UNDRR. Seemingly, recently more international stakeholders, including IOC are being consulted and invited to the table. IOC is invited to participate in the Organizing Committee of the Global EW4All Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) with the aim of organizing a Global meeting in Geneva in June 2025.

# INTERNATIONAL UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Technical Secretary provided updates on the 2nd UNESCO-IOC Global Tsunami Symposium "Two Decades After 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami: Reflection and the Way Forward" main event will be held in Banda Aceh, Indonesia during 11-14 November 2004. The symposium is hosted by the Government of Indonesia through its Agency of Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics (BMKG) in collaboration with the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Resilience Section and IUGG Joint Tsunami Commission. He is a member of the Symposium Organizing Committee. He is also negotiating to ensure NEAMTWS experts will have a fair opportunity to participate in the main plenary. Experts can submit abstracts to participate in pre-events and participate in special events.

More Information is available at the following site:

**IOC**: <https://oceanexpert.org/event/4310>

**BMKG:** <https://globaltsunamisymposium.bmkg.go.id/>

Other meetings planned include.

* [3rd World Conference on Meteotsunami in Bodrum](https://3rdmeteotsunami.org/), Türkiye, 13-17 October 2024
* ICG/NEAMTWS IXX session will take place at the end of October / early November prior to the 2nd UNESCO-IOC Global Tsunami Symposium. Location and Venue is yet to be decided, noting NIOF had offered to host at the ICG/NEAMTWS-XVIII session in February 2024.

# AOB/UPDATES ON WGS/TTS

Mr Ignacio Aguirre Ayerbe, Vice-chairperson reported on his participation as a training facilitator and resource person at the North-West Indian Ocean (NWIO) Regional Workshops on Tsunami Inundation Mapping and Tsunami Evacuation Planning, held in Muscat, Oman on 21-25 April 2024.The workshops were organised by UNESCO-IOC Indian Ocean Tsunami Information Centre (IOTIC), UNESCO-IOC Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWMS), and Project Team for the UNESCAP TTF project with the support of the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami National Contacts (TNCs) from the countries participating in the event: India, Iran, Oman, Pakistan, and United Arab Emirates.

# CLOSING

The Chairperson closed the SC meeting at 17: 45.

ANNEX 1. AGENDA

**ICG/NEAMTWS Steering Committee and   
Information Session**

3 May 2024

**Provisional Agenda**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda** | **Agenda Themes/ Topics** | **Speaker/lead** | **Time** |
| **9:30-13:00** | **PART I** |  |  |
|  | **OPENING** | **Chairperson/ Sec** |  |
| **1.0** | **TSUNAMI READY AND SUPPORT TOOLS** |  | **30** |
| 1.1 | Update on TRRP: Planning TR Application for Recognition | Denis Chang Seng | 5 |
| 1.2 | Update on TR Toolkit | Denis Chang Seng | 5 |
| 1.3 | ISO Standards | Officers | 5 |
| 1.4 | NEAMTIC | Tech Sec/ Officers - TBC | 10 |
| 1.5 | Discussion & Q&A | All | 5 |
| **2.0** | **TSUNAMI EXERCISE** |  | **25** |
| 2.1 | Update on NEAMWave 23 Evaluation report | Co-Chairperson Exercise | 15 |
| 2.2 | Discussion & Q&A |  | 10 |
| **3.0** | **DOCUMENTATION** |  | **45** |
| 3.1 | Update on OUG | TT Documentation | 15 |
| 3.2 | GSDD Revision by April 2024 | TT TWO | 10 |
| 3.3 | ICG/NEAMTWS XVIII Summary Report and Other Doc | Tech Sec | 10 |
| 3.4 | Discussion & Q&A | All | 10 |
| **4.0** | **NEW CHALLENGES** |  | **50** |
| 4.1 | PTF implementation | TSP-OP | 10 |
| 4.2 | New ToR for Non-Seismic Tsunami and planned activities | TT non-seismic | 20 |
| 4.3 | Monitoring sea level status in NEAM region | WG2&3 and Tec Sec | 10 |
| 4.4 | Discussion & Q&A |  | 10 |
| **5.0** | **GOVERNANCE** |  | **60** |
| 5.1 | Reorganisation | Officers | 10 |
| 5.2 | ToR SC / Secretariat / Officers | Tech Sec & Officers | 10 |
| 5.3 | Draft EU Directive | WG4 Chairperson | 10 |
| 5.4 | Discussion & Q&A | All | 30 |
| 14:00-17:30 | **PART II** |  |  |
| **6.0** | **OCEAN DECADE AND PROJECT ACTIONS** |  | **110** |
| 6.1 | Ocean Decade Projects-Initiatives | Tech Sec /Prof Hamouda (Africa context and connection) | 10 |
| 6.2 | Update on CoastWAVE (End of Phase 1) | Denis Chang Seng | 10 |
| 6.3 | IDSL Survey Results: Informing Strategy Forward | Derya Vennin | 10 |
| 6.4 | Multi Risk Perception Study | Derya Vennin | 10 |
| 6.5 | CoastWAVE Phase 2. Brief presentation and PoA. | Denis Chang Seng | 10 |
| 6.6 | Discussion & Q&A | All | 60 |
| **7.0** | **OTHER GLOBAL INITIATIVES** |  | **20** |
| 7.1 | EW4ALL | Denis Chang Seng | 10 |
| 7.2 | MCR2030 | Denis Chang Seng | 10 |
| 7.3 | Others (GTM, NWIO Regional workshop in Oman...) | Ignacio Aguirre Ayerbe | 10 |
| **8.0** | **INTERNATIONAL UPCOMING MAJOR MEETININGS** |  | **30** |
| 8.1 | IOC Executive Council, June 2024 | Tech Sec/ Chairperson | 5 |
| 8.2 | ICG/NEAMTWS Session-XIX, October 2024 | Tech Sec/ Chairperson | 5 |
| 8.3 | Update on the Global Tsunami Symposium, November 2024 | Tech Sec/ Chairperson DMP (If needed) | 5 |
| 8.4 | Discussion & Q&A | All | 15 |
| **9.0** | **AOB / UPDATES ON WGs/TTs IF ANY**  **Tsunami TREAT LEVEL AS PER TOWS REC** |  |  |
| **10.0** | **CLOSING** | Chairperson /Tech Sec |  |

**ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
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