

**Embassy of India
Bangkok**

Press Release

Government of India and UNESCAP join forces to strengthen early warning systems for natural disasters

On the occasion of the remembrance Ceremony on the 10th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, the Government of India announced today a major new contribution of US\$ 1 million to the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries.

2. The Asia-Pacific region remains highly vulnerable to coastal hazards such as tsunamis, tropical storms and storm surges. The contribution from the Government of India will boost ESCAP's efforts to strengthen early warning systems through regional and South-South cooperation, to ensure that vulnerable communities receive the timely warning information that is required to save lives and livelihoods in disasters. Created in 2005 following the devastation caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the Trust Fund supports activities that build resilience through strengthened early warning systems for coastal hazards. It has made important contributions to the establishment of effective regional mechanisms such as the IOTWS and the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES), of which India is the current Chair of the Council, as well as to the strengthening of warning systems at the national and local levels.

3. In her message, H. E. Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs and Overseas Indian Affairs of India said, "India joins the international community in its efforts to prepare for any such natural calamity in the future by establishing effective early warning systems". "ESCAP is extremely pleased to partner with the Government of India to further strengthen regional early warning systems and build resilience to natural disasters," said Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and ESCAP Executive Secretary. "The Trust Fund has a strong record in promoting innovative solutions based on a regional approach, and the contribution from the Government of India will give these efforts a major boost."

4. H. E. Mr. Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Thailand and Permanent Representative to ESCAP said, "The Indian Ocean Tsunami was devastating in its impact on coastal communities in several countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Despite suffering large casualties, India was one of the first countries to extend assistance in Search and Rescue and rehabilitation of the victims of the Tsunami in countries in its neighborhood. Since then, India has made great strides to strengthen its multi-hazard early warning system and has extended this facility to cover the region. On the tenth anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, India has announced the contribution of USD 1 million to the Tsunami Trust Fund of UNESCAP to further strengthen the process of building resilience to natural disasters in the Asia-Pacific region".

5. The contribution to the Trust Fund is part of a series of steps taken by the Government of India to support regional early warning systems. India is a Regional Service Provider for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS), which became operational in 2011, and also an active member of the ESCAP/World Meteorological Organization Panel on Tropical Cyclones.

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