



JULY 2006

US IOTWS Program Update

U.S. Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program
from advanced technologies to resilient communities

USAID-Funded Disaster Response Initiative Reaching District Levels in Sri Lanka

June 29, Colombo, Sri Lanka

As part of the US IOTWS Program, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), together with the Sri Lanka Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, is broadening its support the country's efforts to develop a comprehensive disaster management plan which includes Incident Command System (ICS). Developed in the U.S., ICS provides a highly efficient management framework that helps government agencies rapidly react to disaster situations. US ICS experts have introduced ICS to all of Sri Lanka's district secretaries and described how ICS can be adapted to Sri Lanka's disaster management system. The 35 Sri Lankan officials attending the Conference of Government Agents/ District Secretaries in Colombo responded that ICS can play a significant role in response to both natural disasters and human-induced disasters in the country.

Scientists Seek Clues from the Past to Help Forecast Future Tsunamis

July 3-15, 2006, Khao Lak, Thailand

Fourteen geologists from four Indian Ocean countries—India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand—met in southern Thailand for field training in estimating the frequency of unusually large tsunamis, like the tsunami of December 2004. This type of information can help to define probabilities of future tsunamis—now a key parameter in planning coastal development around the Indian Ocean. Two scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) conducted the training as part of the US IOTWS Program.



Geologists from Thailand and Sri Lanka survey a transect through mangroves toppled by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Photo credit: B. Atwater/USGS.

Conference to Support Youth in Building Disaster Resilient Communities

July 3-18, 2006, Bangkok and Phuket, Thailand

The U.S. State Department is supporting a study program was held in Bangkok and Phuket, Thailand entitled Partnership for Youth in Building Disaster Resilient Communities as part of an initiative of the East-West Center in Hawaii called "Linking Individuals, Knowledge, and Culture". The Partnership for Youth Program brings U.S. and Thai high school students together to form a Blue Ribbon Panel that are studying the role of youth in building disaster-resilient communities. The high school students meet with U.S. and Thai experts in disaster preparedness and relief as well as government officials and civic leaders responsible for disaster management to examine "best practices" and to explore comparative governance, civic participation, and accountability in disaster response and management. The US IOTWS Program shared experiences in early warning and disaster management in Thailand during the kick-off event in Bangkok and participated in the final seminar in Phuket with local government officials.



Thailand Adopting US Model for Rapid Warning Communications

July 26-28, 2006, Hua Hin, Thailand

The Government of Thailand is adopting the U.S. model for Tsunami Alert Rapid Notification System (TARNS) to enhance collaboration between key emergency managers involved in the dissemination of warnings. On July 26-28, 2006, representatives from the USAID funded-US IOTWS Program met with officials from all levels of the Thai Government, private sector, and the media to share experiences and lessons learned on communications technologies for emergency warning dissemination in both Thailand and the U.S. TARNS will initially provide a quick-response system for tsunami alerts but will eventually be expanded to include alerts for other disasters such as flooding. A set of common procedures and protocols will be developed for all relevant entities, with a design tailored to the government structure, culture, infrastructure, and available technologies. The National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC) is working with USAID, USFS, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement the initiative under the US IOTWS Program.



Media representatives discuss procedures Thailand's emergency warning dissemination (left), Deanne Shulman/USFS gives interview to the press during TARNS workshop (right)

Photo credit: R. Supaporn

UPCOMING US IOTWS PROGRAM AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

US IOTWS Program: Study Tour on Disaster Management in the United States

For more information contact Trudie Mahoney contact tmahoney@fsip.net

August 19 –September 2, 2006

US IOTWS Program: Seismology Training Workshop, Malaysia

For more information contact Shane Detweiler, USGS, at shane@usgs.gov

August 21-25, 2006

Natural Hazard Management Conference 2006, New Zealand

For more information visit http://www.us-iotws.gov/ev_en.php?ID=2196_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC

August 22– 25, 2006

US IOTWS Program: Seismology Training Workshop, Maldives

For more information contact Shane Detweiler, USGS, at shane@usgs.gov

August 27–31, 2006

The 3rd Coastal Zone Asia Pacific Conference (CZAP2006) on "Linking People and the Coasts"

For more information contact Dr. Sapta Putra at saptaputra@cbn.net.id

August 29 -September 2, 2006

About the US Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program

The US IOTWS Program is part of the international effort to develop tsunami warning system capabilities in the Indian Ocean following the December 2004 tsunami disaster. The US program adopts an "end-to-end" approach—addressing regional, national, and local aspects of a truly functional warning system—along with multiple other hazards that threaten communities in the region. In partnership with the international community, national governments, and other partners, the US program offers technology transfer, training, and information resources to strengthen the tsunami warning and preparedness capabilities of national and local stakeholders in the region.

For more information please visit www.us-iotws.gov.

