



Permanent Mission of Norway
to the United Nations
New York



Permanent Mission of
Peru to the United
Nations

World Tsunami Awareness Day 2024: Youth Engagement, Education and Empowering the Next Generation

5 November 2024

Delegates Dining Room, United Nations Headquarters, New York

#GetToHighGround #TsunamiDay

Co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Chile, Japan, the Maldives and Thailand, the Permanent Missions of Australia, Indonesia, Norway, and Peru as Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Disaster Risk Reduction, and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Environmental, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Background

World Tsunami Awareness Day (WTAD), observed annually on November 5, was established by the United Nations General Assembly to raise awareness about the dangers of tsunamis and to promote comprehensive actions to mitigate their impacts. In 2024, WTAD will hold special significance as it marks the 20th anniversary of the catastrophic Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004, which resulted in immense loss of life and highlighted the urgent need for improved disaster preparedness and early warning systems.

The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history. Triggered by a 9.1 magnitude earthquake off the west coast of northern Sumatra, the tsunami unleashed massive waves that devastated coastal regions from Indonesia to South Africa. The scale of destruction highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive disaster preparedness and early warning systems, spurring international efforts to reduce tsunami risk and enhance community resilience.

Despite their infrequency, tsunamis are exceptionally deadly. In the past 100 years, 58 tsunamis have claimed more than 260,000 lives, surpassing all other natural hazards in terms of mortality rate¹. Over 700 million people currently live in low-lying coastal areas and small island developing states, where the risk of tsunamis is significant². Public awareness and education are crucial to ensuring that communities know how to respond when a tsunami warning is issued.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/tsunami-awareness-day>

² https://www.who.int/health-topics/tsunamis#tab=tab_1



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As global communities increasingly face the devastating impacts of natural hazards, the role of youth in disaster risk reduction and preparedness has become more vital than ever. Young people, highly affected by hazards such as tsunamis, possess unique perspectives and innovative approaches that can significantly enhance community resilience. In the context of tsunami preparedness, youth are not just passive recipients of disaster response measures but are actively contributing to the development and implementation of strategies that safeguard their communities. This involvement ranges from participating in early warning system initiatives to leading educational campaigns that raise awareness of tsunami risks. The energy, creativity, and commitment of youth are indispensable in fostering a culture of preparedness and prevention, which is crucial for mitigating the impact of such disasters.

The commemoration of WTAD 2024 will galvanize efforts at both international and community levels to enhance tsunami preparedness. It will bring together leaders, experts, and stakeholders to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices. Education is a powerful tool in preparing communities for disasters, and youth are at the heart of this process. Formal education systems, as well as informal learning opportunities, provide the knowledge and skills necessary for effective disaster risk reduction. However, beyond conventional education, storytelling and cultural heritage also play a pivotal role in inspiring and motivating young people to engage in DRR efforts. By connecting these stories with contemporary DRR strategies, the panel discussion will highlight the potential of education to transform youth into proactive agents of change in their communities.

2024 Activities at UN Headquarters

To raise awareness about reducing tsunami-related risks and enhance community preparedness, a series of activities are planned at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2024. This includes a lunch reception with a panel discussion on empowering youth through education, which will feature a diverse range of voices. As well as an exhibition opening, entitled ***"Tsunami: Sea Change for Resilience"***. This event aims to promote awareness and education on tsunami risks, empowering the next generation to act on reducing these threats and look back on the progress made in tsunami preparedness.

1. ***Panel Discussion - "Building Future Resilience: Youth Empowerment and Education in Tsunami Preparedness"***

Aim

The panel discussion will focus on how youth can play a crucial role in fostering a culture of preparedness and prevention. In light of the 20th anniversary of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the panel will also highlight the significant progress made in international collaboration and tsunami preparedness since this catastrophic event. It also will



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highlight the successes achieved through global partnerships in developing robust early warning systems and enhancing community resilience to tsunami threats worldwide.

The panel will provide practical insights into effective preparedness and response strategies. Through these narratives, the discussion will emphasize the importance of community collaboration the integration of diverse perspectives including youth, and inspire ction towards tsunami disaster preparedness.

Guiding Questions

- How can educational institutions and communities collaborate to equip youth with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective tsunami preparedness and disaster risk reduction?
- In what ways can the lessons learned from past tsunami events be effectively communicated to younger generations to foster a continuous culture of preparedness?
- How has international collaboration, contributed to improved resilience against tsunamis in vulnerable regions? And what key achievements have been made in global tsunami preparedness and early warning systems?
- How can youth-led initiatives in tsunami preparedness contribute to the ongoing development of global and regional policies? What specific mechanisms can ensure that youth voices are included in shaping these policies?
- What are the best practices for strengthening partnerships between governments, international organizations, and youth groups to enhance tsunami preparedness, particularly in coastal and island communities?

Desired Outcome

To emphasize the critical role of education in empowering youth to take active leadership in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and to advocate for the inclusion of youth in policy frameworks at both national and global levels. The event aims to emphasize the progress made in international collaboration on tsunami preparedness since 2004 and the role of education in empowering communities, including youth, to take active leadership in DRR. By showcasing examples of both international cooperation and youth-led efforts, the event aims to inspire the inclusion of youth in disaster risk reduction. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure youth is better integrated both as participants and leaders in tsunami preparedness processes, driving innovation and collaboration to mitigate the impacts of future possible tsunamis.



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Programme

Moderator: Mrs. Elaine Reyes, News Anchor/Podcast Host, CGTN America - China Global Television Network

<p>Opening Segment And Launch of the Exhibition</p> <p>1:00 pm to – 1:15 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (tbc) Representative from Japan - (tbc) H.E. Mr. Philemon Yang, President of the General Assembly - Representative from UNESCO - Recorded message from Mr Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction
1:15 pm – 1:20 pm	UNDRR - Documentary Video
<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>"Building Future Resilience: Youth Empowerment and Education in Tsunami Preparedness"</p> <p>1:20 pm – 2:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E Ambassador Ali Nasser Mohammed, Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the United Nations - (tbc) H.E Ambassador Cherdchai Chaivaivid, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations - (tbc) UN System Representation - Ms. Glorymar Gomez-Perez, UNESCO-IOC International Tsunami Information Centre's (ITIC) manager for the Tsunami Braille Pilot Project - Dr Stephan T. Grilli, Ph.D, Distinguished Professor and Chair, Ocean Engineering, Rhode Island University - Japanese Student Chair
<p>Intervention from the Floor</p> <p>2:00 pm – 2:30 pm</p>	
Closing Segment	



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2:30 pm – 2:35 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (tbc) H.E. Mr. Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations and Co-Chair of the Group of Friends for Disaster Risk Reduction - H.E. Mrs Paula Narváez Ojeda, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations
Viewing of the Exhibition 2:35 pm – 3:00 pm	

Contact

Please contact Ms. Ines Benomar, New York Liaison Office, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, at ines.benomar@un.org for further information.



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