IOC Circular Letter No. 2396
(Available in English and French only)

To: ICG/NEAMTWS Tsunami Warning Focal Points (TWFP) and Tsunami National Contacts (TNC)
ICG/NEAMTWS Chair, Vice-Chairs and Officers

cc.: Official National Coordinating Body for liaison with the IOC Member States,
Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States and
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States in the NEAM region

Subject: Invitation to participate to the first NEAMTWS Enlarged Communication Test Exercise (NEAMTWS-ECTE1) on 10 August 2011

We have the pleasure to announce the first NEAMTWS Enlarged Communication Test Exercise (NEAMTWS-ECTE1), which will be conducted on 10 August 2011. The NEAMTWS-ECTE1 will involve the National Tsunami Warning Centres (NTWC) and the Tsunami Warning Focal Point (TWFP).

The Regional Tsunami Watch Centres (RTWC), National Tsunami Warning Centres (NTWC) and Tsunami Warning Focal Points (TWFP) must keep a high level of readiness so as to be able to act efficiently and effectively to provide for the public’s safety during fast-onset and rapidly-evolving natural disasters like the tsunamis. To maintain this high state of operational readiness and especially for infrequent events such as tsunamis, tsunami watch/warning centres and emergency agencies must regularly practice their response procedures to ensure that vital communication links work seamlessly, and that agencies and response personnel know the roles that they will need to play during an actual event.
NEAMTWS-VII during 23-25 November 2010 in Paris-France, established a Task Team on Communication Test and Tsunami Exercises (TT-CT&TE) which is responsible for the preparation and conduct of NEAMTWS-ECTE1 and organization of its assessment. The aim of the NEAMTWS-ECTE1 is to refine procedures for testing the communication of tsunami alert messages between National Tsunami Warning Centres and all Tsunami Warning Focal Points (TWFPs), including speed and availability within NEAMTWS region. CTEs conducted during the previous intersessional period highlighted the importance of having other communication method like Global Telecommunication System (GTS), and therefore utilization of GTS during the NEAMTWS-ECTE1 is another aim of the Exercise.

NEAMTWS-ECTE1 will address the questions related to the evaluation and issuance of the warning message by tsunami watch/warning centres, as in the previous CTEs, but will also attempt to assess the national and/or local response and warning dissemination mechanisms once emergency authorities receive a warning. NEAMTWS-ECTE1 will involve all possible TWFPs using conventional message dissemination channels that have been previously subject to test between candidate RTWC and NTWCs. Message dissemination using GTS will be only available between TWFPs that have this system available to them at the operational level.

More information on the nature of exercise together with technical details concerning the conduct and evaluation of the exercise can be found in the NEAMTWS-ECTE1 Manual, attached to this Circular Letter. All relevant documentation and updated information on the Exercise can be accessed through the IOC website.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

François Schindelé
Chairman, ICG/NEAMTWS

Wendy Watson-Wright
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO
Executive Secretary, IOC