



GBDRRRF

**THE GLOBAL BANK
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
AND RECONSTRUCTION FUND**

*Public Affairs Section of the
Global Bank*



PRESS RELEASE

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World Tsunami Awareness Day, 5 November



Los Angeles, CA – November 5, 2019 – In 2015 at the 81st plenary meeting, the United Nations General Assembly decided to maintain the observance of the World Tsunami Awareness Day on Tuesday the 5th day of November (Resolution 70/203, 22 December 2015) in order to raise public awareness of the risk caused by tsunamis. On the annual observance of the Tsunami Awareness Day the Global Bank Disaster Risk Reduction and Reconstruction Fund – An Umbrella Trust Fund (GB-DRRRF) works to raise tsunami awareness and share innovative approaches and technology to [disaster risk reduction](#) as a vehicle to promote a global culture of natural disaster reduction, including [disaster prevention](#), [mitigation](#), and [preparedness](#).

The World Tsunami Awareness Day was the brainchild of Japan which, due to its repeated bitter experience, has over the years built up significant expertise in areas such as tsunami early warning, public action, and building back better after a disaster to reduce future impacts.

The date for the annual celebration was chosen in honour of the Japanese story of “**Inamura-no-Hi**”, meaning the “**burning of the rice sheaves**”. During an 1854 earthquake a farmer saw the tide receding, a sign of a looming tsunami. He set fire to his entire harvest to warn villagers, who fled to high ground. Afterwards, he built an embankment and planted trees as a buffer against future waves.

This year’s theme is based on Target (B) of the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#): ‘**Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption services, among them health and education facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030.**’

Early Warning System

By the year 2030, an estimated 50 per cent of the world's population will live in coastal areas exposed to flooding, storms and tsunamis.

Tsunamis have claimed many lives and caused tremendous damage and are a common challenge for many countries, as was witnessed in Valdivia Chile in 1960, in the Philippines in 1976, in Papua New Guinea in 1998, in Turkey in 1999, in Peru in 2001, in the coastal states of the Indian Ocean in 2004, off the coast of Samoa and Tonga in 2009 and in eastern Japan in 2011. Disasters exacted a heavy toll on human life, with the loss of hundreds of thousands and the impact on millions of others.

No tsunami can be prevented. Early warning systems are critical to ensure the catastrophic loss of life, like that which occurred when the Indian Ocean tsunami struck, will never happen again.

The Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWMS) was formed in response to the tragic tsunami on December 26th, 2004 in which over 230,000 lives were lost around the Indian Ocean region.

An effective tsunami warning system reaches all persons in danger before the waves hit. The giant waves can move fast – faster than a person can run. Timely tsunami warnings are essential for mitigating the impact. When alerts are received by government agencies, national tsunami emergency response plans also must be in place so that coordinated actions are immediately taken.

Effective systems do not rely on technology alone, but also provide communities with enhanced knowledge about the range of risks they face, giving them a higher chance to protect lives and livelihoods – even if they are so closely located to the tsunami earthquake source that they have no time for an official warning.

Ensuring ‘End-to-End’ Coverage

Perhaps more than any other factor, the lack of early warning systems resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths on 26 December 2004. After the tragedy, governments of the most-affected countries – Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and Maldives – were at the forefront of creating a reliable “**end-to-end**” Indian Ocean-wide tsunami early warning system.

These governments also received unprecedented cooperation from bilateral and multilateral development banks and United Nations Agencies; international development partners; scientists around the world; businesses; and civil society alike to make the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS) fully operational since 2011.

The Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System also can address a number of other critical coastal issues: cyclones, sea swells, floods and earthquakes. It is, in the best possible sense, an integrated “**system of systems**” – a network of national and regional tsunami

monitoring, warning and advisory services covering the entire Indian Ocean region, as well as being a vital part of a global tsunami warning framework. Now the system is serving as a model for newer technologies being developed for threat-based tsunami warnings.

The [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#) recognized the significance of preparedness and the prompt dissemination of information through early warning systems, the use of traditional knowledge and the concept of “**Building back better**” in the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases in order to protect the lives of people and prevent the damage caused by tsunamis.

Investing in resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, and education is critical to saving people and protecting their assets against tsunami risk in the future.

Perhaps you missed...



[“Build Better Before” is the Global Bank Group President Ron Nechemia’s Message for 2019 International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction](#)



[2019 International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction](#)



[The Chairman of Global Bank Group Ron Nechemia to Lead the Global Bank Delegation at Japan’s First Ever G-20 Development Working Group’s Meeting](#)



[“Build Better Before” Instead of “Build Back Better” is the Global Bank Group Message for G-20 Development Working Group’s Meeting in Tokyo, Japan](#)

References

1. United Nations General Assembly Session 44, Resolution 236. [International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction A/RES/44/236 22 December 1989](#). Retrieved 2008-09-18.
2. United Nations General Assembly Session 56, Resolution 195. [International Strategy for Disaster Reduction A/RES/56/195 21 January 2002](#). Retrieved 2008-09-18.
3. United Nations General Assembly Session 64, Resolution 200. [International Strategy for Disaster Reduction A/64/200 21 December 2009](#). Retrieved 2011-10-14.

GB-DRRRF links

- [Disaster and Climate Risk Assessment](#)
- [Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response](#)
- [Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience](#)
- [Promoting Resilience Infrastructure](#)
- [Effective Post-Disaster Reconstruction and Recovery](#)
- [The Chairman of Global Bank Group Ron Nechemia to Lead the Global Bank Delegation at Japan's First-Ever G-20 Development Working Group's Meeting](#)

Related links

- [The Global Climate Agreement in Paris](#)
- [The Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030](#)

About GB-DRRRF

The Global Bank *Disaster Risk Reduction* and Reconstruction Fund – An Umbrella Trust Fund (GB-DRRRF), established in 2017, is a multi-donor partnership and grant-making financing mechanism. Its purpose is mainstreaming climate change into development to help achieve the [Sendai Framework targets by 2030](#) - a decade-long plan to help make the world safer from disasters caused by natural hazards — and to support the implementation of the [Global Climate Agreement in Paris](#), and prevent disasters undermining progress on the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). The rapid and flexible support offered by the [Global Bank Disaster Risk Reduction and Reconstruction Fund](#) makes it a central pillar of the [Global Bank Group](#) agencies' humanitarian response architecture.

More detailed information can be found on the GB-DRRRF's website <http://www.gbdrrrf.org/>

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