

ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami,  
Disaster and Climate Preparedness

**2020**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness

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# Contributions

As of 31 December 2020, the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness (hereinafter referred to as “the Fund”) had received US\$ 15.8 million in contributions from the following donors:



Bangladesh  
US\$10,000



Germany  
US\$999,380



India  
US\$1,000,000



Japan  
US\$400,000



Nepal  
US\$2,000



Philippines  
(the)  
US\$20,000



Sweden  
US\$2,868,139



Switzerland  
US\$300,000



Thailand  
US\$10,060,000



Turkey  
US\$200,000

The Netherlands provided an Associate Expert from September 2008 to April 2011. Germany has contributed with an Associate Programme Officer from July 2016 to June 2019. ESCAP contributed in-kind technical expertise and administrative assistance to the Fund.

# Member countries and partners

Special thanks are extended to the ESCAP member countries in the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and the Pacific that are covered by the Fund, as well as the partners that work together with ESCAP to contribute to more resilient coastal communities, and ultimately to save lives and reduce loss and damage from disasters.



## Preface

The Asia-Pacific region continues to be hit by a relentless sequence of disasters: cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, droughts, dust storms and heatwaves. These disasters strike without discrimination, but inflict the greatest damage in the poorest communities, including minority groups, people in remote areas and those on the margins of the region's rapidly expanding cities.

In addition, disasters are becoming increasingly complex. As climate has warmed over recent years, the world is facing a new climate reality. With geographical deviation from their usual impact regions, changing frequencies, patterns and increasing intensities, hazards are becoming more complex to predict. The population potentially exposed to climate-related hazards as floods, typhoons and cyclones has significantly increased. A major challenge to promoting risk-informed development and thus reducing disaster risk remains the integration of weather and climate information into decision-making.

2020 has highlighted the complexity of disasters. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic brought social disruption and severe economic impact to the region, which is already struck by disasters. With cyclones and other disasters affecting Asia-Pacific at the same time, it underlined the fragile interconnection of systems, affecting lives and livelihoods. The combination of climate disasters and COVID-19 has exposed a new riskscape, reiterating the important role of early warning and preparedness as strategies to reduce disaster risk and effectively build resilience. Where climate-related events and biological hazards intersect, they can set off cascading disasters with widespread devastation. This experience stresses the need for a paradigm shift from a single hazard, single sector perspective to a multi-hazard, multi-sectoral and systemic risk perspective.

Since its inception in 2005, the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness has supported 29 projects with a budget of approximately \$15.8 million and directly benefitted 19 countries. At the regional level, it has provided sustained financial support for the establishment of key initiatives that deliver cost-effective warning products and services, particularly for tsunamis and extreme weather systems.

The Trust Fund continues to evolve and build on the opportunities offered by the global and regional commitments to further scale up, share and replicate successful pilots in early warning systems through regional cooperation. Investments in these systems have brought substantial benefits in terms of economies-of-scale. The Trust Fund has also proven to be an effective vehicle for countries to access and share data, tools and expertise to support disaster resilience in the region.

In December 2020, the Fund's Advisory Council made an important decision in approving a new strategy for 2021-2024, which sets the priorities for the next phase of the Fund. Looking forward, the Trust Fund will continue playing a key role in the region in promoting effective and sustainable end-to-end early warning systems for coastal hazards such as tsunamis, tropical cyclones, flooding and

storm surges. Towards this end, the Trust Fund will focus its support on the two key people-centred pillars: (i) strengthening multi-hazard early warning systems for all people, with a focus on the vulnerable and marginalized and (ii) strengthening social and economic resilience in Asia-Pacific. The two pillars will be further supported by two modalities of implementation, namely, enhancing disaster and climate risk management through (iii) regional cooperation, and (iv) mainstreaming science, technology and innovation.

## Results Summary

Since its establishment in 2005, the ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness has contributed significantly to the progress made in building regional and national warning systems for coastal hazards. In 2011, a key milestone was reached with the operationalization of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS), which was established through the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO).

The Fund was one of the many contributors to the IOTWMS, through support for the adaptation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for tsunami warning and emergency response, combined with training and other capacity building at regional, national and local levels. The Fund also supported the establishment of the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES), which is closely linked to the IOTWMS.

RIMES is an intergovernmental institution that provides cost-effective warning products and services, particularly for tsunamis and extreme weather systems. These are especially useful for countries that are at high-risk of disasters but possess limited domestic capacity in hazard monitoring and early warning. RIMES also assists countries in applying hydro-meteorological risk information more effectively for decision making at the national and local levels. Services include the provision of daily numerical weather predictions, severe weather information forecasts and seasonal climate outlooks for risk management and preparedness, all delivered within the framework of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

At the national level, some of the most valuable and sustainable results of the Fund's projects involve the strengthening of monitoring and warning services. More recently, of particular note is the role of the Trust Fund in slow-onset disasters, phenomena that lend themselves to early warning. However, often they do not spur early action because of a lack of understanding of the action required by the warning at the ground level as well as the absence of institutional mechanisms to consider such information on a regular basis. To help overcome these challenges, through the Trust Fund, ESCAP has supported activities aimed at building capacities for climate preparedness in highly vulnerable countries. As a result, national climate outlook forums, or monsoon forums as they are popularly known due to their convening around the onset of the monsoon season, have supported dissemination of seasonal forecast information to understand potential impacts.

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# 1 Introduction

The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami resulted in widespread loss of human life and livelihoods, severe damage to infrastructure and ecosystems and large economic costs. Following this disaster, there was a strong recognition across the Asia-Pacific region of the need to undertake a coordinated, long-term effort to mitigate the impact of natural disasters through effective preparedness and prevention measures, including the establishment and further strengthening of early warning systems.

The ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness was established in 2005 following a US\$ 10 million contribution from the Royal Thai Government. The Fund is part of the overall United Nations effort to strengthen resilience across the Asia-Pacific region. It contributes to the narrowing of capacity gaps and supports the development of an integrated, regional early warning system comprised of a network of collaborative centres. In 2011, the scope of the Fund was expanded to also cover disaster and climate preparedness, while retaining a focus on end-to-end early warning for coastal hazards.

ESCAP is entrusted with managing and administering the Fund and draws on its mandate as the commission for Asia and the Pacific to promote regional cooperation and integration for effective disaster risk reduction.

In accordance with the Fund's Terms and Conditions, this Annual Report provides an overview of the results of the Fund in 2020. It also describes the financial status of the Fund and the activities carried out by the secretariat.

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