



NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION (NEMO)
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY
ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
WEST INDIES

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NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEMO WILL JOIN THE REST OF THE WORLD TO COMMEMORATE “WORLD TSUNAMI AWARENESS DAY” (WTAD) - NOVEMBER 5, 2023

November 5, 2023 is commemorated all around the world, as “World Tsunami Awareness Day” (WTAD). This is being done annually to raise public awareness of the deadly threat posed by tsunamis and to share innovative approaches to reducing risk.

Tsunamis are rare but they can be extremely deadly however, early warning systems can save lives. Tsunamis are often accompanied by natural signs that can be sensed by an alert person, especially in areas close to the beach. These warning signs are ‘Feel, See and Hear.’ Equally important are community and individual understanding about how and where to evacuate before a wave strikes.

The National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) this year completed work to recognise the coastal communities from Kingstown to Argyle as tsunami ready through the UNESCO tsunami ready process of assessment, community engagement, simulation exercises, developing standard operating procedures for evacuation and communicating early warning messages at the community level in the event of a tsunami. These communities gained recognition as Tsunami Ready Communities on Friday 15th September, 2023.

The community of Union Island was the first to be certified as Tsunami Ready in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2020. These Tsunami Ready Programmes were funded through the International Tsunami Information Centre - Caribbean Office represented by Dr. Christa von Hillebrant and Mrs. Alison Brome from the Caribbean Tsunami Information Centre in Barbados.

Since 2020 the International Tsunami Information Centre, the Caribbean Tsunami Information Centre and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have been providing support to the National Emergency Management Organisation to have these communities’ tsunami ready. This included the building of local capacity in the area of mapping through a tsunami mapping exercise training. This training introduced participants to the tool for developing tsunami inundation maps. As a result of this, the Geographical Information System Team from the Physical Planning Unit provided support to develop the tsunami inundation maps for Union Island and the coastal communities from Kingstown to Argyle. As part of this programme, thirty-nine signs have been installed throughout the coastal communities from Kingstown to Argyle to guide residents as to where they need to go in the event of a tsunami. The members of these coastal communities also collaborated with the National Emergency Management Organisation to develop their Tsunami Evacuation Plan for their communities. A National Tsunami Board was also formed to coordinate the certification process.

The National Emergency Management Organisation also commenced work with the community of Bequia to gain recognition under the UNESCO tsunami ready process.

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