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PRESS RELEASE

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UNU to Host Symposium Focusing on Tsunami Preparedness and Warning System Performance

EVENT: International Symposium on “The Great East Japan Tsunami and Tsunami Warning Systems: Policy Perspectives”

DATE: 16–17 February 2012 (Thursday & Friday), 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM

VENUE: United Nations University Headquarters, Tokyo

ORGANIZERS: United Nations University and UNESCO

SUPPORTERS: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, University of Tokyo, Fire and Disaster Management Agency, Japan Meteorological Agency, Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) and The Mainichi Newspapers

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- The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 11 March 2011 caused nearly 20,000 deaths as well as widespread destruction of buildings and infrastructure in flooded coastal zones. The societal impacts and social and economic consequences were immense.
 - Since then, numerous national and international post-tsunami field surveys have been carried out, and performance analyses of tsunami early warning systems in place at the time of the disaster have been conducted. Based on these surveys and performance analyses, this symposium will offer perspectives from invited high-level decision-makers and scientists.
 - The symposium, which will be opened by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, will comprise five sessions. Discussions will focus on: (i) the chronology of events, including what was unexpected and new strategies to prepare for the unexpected; (ii) the performance of warning systems, people’s responses and the role of education in awareness-raising; (iii) improvements needed in warning systems to make them effective and understandable; (iv) the role of mass media with a special focus on global media collaboration; and (v) the role of international organizations in strengthening international cooperation.
 - Simultaneous Japanese–English interpretation will be provided.
 - For more information, including the event programme, please see symposium webpage on the UNU-ISP website at <http://isp.unu.edu/tsunami-symposium>.

Media representatives are cordially invited to attend. To reserve a media space, please send your request, indicating which day/session(s) you wish to attend, to media@unu.edu.