

S. America's Pacific coast eyes tsunami warning system

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Tourists swim in Hangaroa beach as the sun sets on Easter Island, 3700 km off the Chilean coast in the Pacific Ocean. Officials from countries along South America's Pacific coast met at a UNESCO-sponsored event in Peru's capital Tuesday to design a tsunami early-warning system.

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Experts from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile—all countries sitting on the seismically active Pacific ring of fire—included oceanographers, seismologists, and natural disaster response officials.

They are ironing out a protocol expected to be named "Standard Operating Procedures for Tsunami Alert Communications in the

Southeastern Pacific."

"UNESCO has been working on this regional program among the four countries so that they share regional, national and local strategies to reduce risks in [coastal areas](#)," said Fernando Berrios, an official with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

One of the South American nations' goals is to link their national early warning alert systems.

In February 2010, a [massive earthquake](#) hit Chile's central Maule region, south of Valparaiso, generating [tsunami waves](#), killing more than 500 people and causing billions of dollars in damage.

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