


US INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM (IOTWS)

<p>National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Silver Spring, Maryland</p>	
<p>Performance Period: 2007 – 2009</p>	
<p>Status: Completed Successfully</p>	

On the morning of December 26, 2004, a magnitude 9.3 earthquake off the coast of Indonesia’s Sumatra Island caused a massive tsunami that spread outward and struck coastlines across the Indian Ocean. Over the next 12 hours almost 300,000 people in eight countries perished, and 1.5 million more lost their homes or livelihoods. While it may not have been possible to have prevented all loss of life from the December 2004 tsunami, the death toll would have been drastically reduced if an early warning system had been in place to alert communities to evacuate the coastal areas and move inland. To mitigate the damage and loss of life from future disasters, world leaders called for a coordinated effort by the international community and the Indian Ocean countries to develop an end-to-end early warning system for the entire Indian Ocean region.

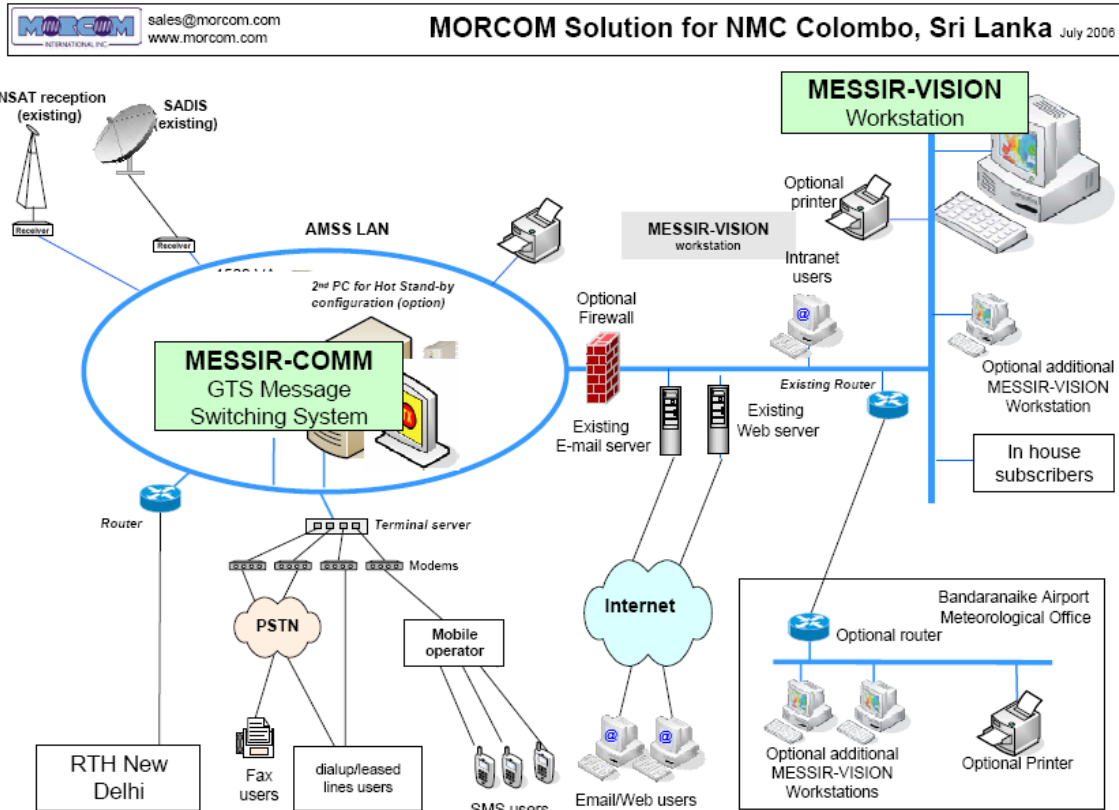
In addition to the extensive disaster relief and reconstruction that followed the tsunami, the international community took a series of steps to initiate a coordinated effort to develop an Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWS). Working through a series of meetings convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the governments of the region agreed to develop an IOTWS within an interconnected network to be coordinated through an Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG) under the auspices of the IOC.

The United States Government, through the Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the US IOTWS Program as its contribution to the international IOTWS effort led by the IOC. Through this two-year, \$16.6 million effort, US scientists and experts shared technical expertise, provided guidance, and helped build early warning capability to assist Indian Ocean countries in becoming capable of taking action and warn their populations in case of potential tsunamis.



International Airport, Male (Maldives)

USAID worked hand-in-hand with NOAA in the implementation of this project. One of the technical improvements targeted was to upgrade the Global Telecommunications System (GTS) in Sri Lanka and the Maldives and to train those countries' officials in the operation of the new systems.



Morcom International, Inc. was selected as the vendor for the supply of the new GTS systems for Sri Lanka and Maldives. Each of these countries received a MESSIR COMM message switch and several MESSIR VISION forecasting workstations.

In Sri Lanka the systems were installed in Colombo at the National Meteorological Center (NMC) and additional workstations were installed at the airport. A similar arrangement was provided for Maldives with the main GTS switch installed at the Male airport.



NOAA Official accepting the system from Morcom's president at Maldives