

IHO HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION ON ANTARCTICA (HCA)
8th Meeting, Niteroi, BRAZIL 6 – 8 October 2008

BRIEF

The 8th Meeting of the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) took place at the Brazilian Hydrographic and Navigation Directorate (DHN), Niteroi, Brazil, 06-08 October 2008, organized and hosted by DHN. At the opening ceremony the Director of DHN welcomed participants to Brazil and wished all a successful meeting. HCA Chairman, Capt GORZIGLIA (IHB Director), thanked Brazil for hosting the meeting and for all the arrangements made and warm welcome provided. He invited HCA Members to contribute as much as possible to the success of the event, highlighting that the work IHO HCA does, corresponds to a reaction of a concrete request made by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to the IHO, to coordinate hydrographic surveys and nautical cartography in Antarctica, in the early nineties.

The Chairman opened the meeting welcoming the 15 IHO/HCA Member States present (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Italy, Norway, Peru, Spain, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay) and representatives of international organizations (IOC, COMNAP and IAATO) and international programs (GEBCO and IBCSO). The Chairman provided a brief but complete report on the activities conducted since the last meeting and proposed the Commission several actions for consideration during the meeting.

The Commission reviewed the status of membership and took note that Japan, Peru and Uruguay have signed the Statutes. Therefore membership has grown to 21 IHO/HCA Members. Following Art 5.2 of the Statutes, the Commission by acclamation elected RADM. Ian MONCRIEF (UK) as Vice Chairman of the HCA.

The Commission reviewed the status of the actions agreed at the last meeting and confirmed that almost all actions had been completed. The meeting considered the reports of the international observer organizations as well as from IHO/HCA Member States. HCA activities were analyzed in the light of the IHO Work Program, mainly including the INT Chart and ENC schemes and chart production. The status of S-55 in Antarctica was also analyzed.

The Commission took note with satisfaction of the results reached after having delivered a Seminar on the Importance of Hydrography in Antarctica, at the last Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting held in June 2008 in Kiev, Ukraine. This event was organized by the IHO/HCA. The Commission felt that it was a worthy activity that has improved the visibility of IHO and hydrography among different Antarctic actors, at national and international levels. The Commission agreed that events such as this contribute to improve priority for hydrographic surveys and nautical chart production within National Antarctic programs. The HCA decided to urge its members in making use of ATCM Resolution 5 (2008) “Improving hydrographic surveying and charting to support safety of navigation and environmental protection in the Antarctic region”.

Noting the positive result of the seminar the HCA agreed to deliver a similar seminar on the occasion of the 2009 COMNAP Council that shall take place in Punta Arenas,

Chile, in August. The content of the seminar and the speakers were identified (IHB, UK, Chile). COMNAP has included this activity in their Council Agenda and are ready and willing to this direct interaction with IHO/HCA.

Considering the importance to reinforce the work of the HCA Hydrographic Survey Work Program Working Group (HSPWG), and the need to identify the way forward, the HCA Chairman proposed an ad-hoc meeting of this WG, aiming at identifying initiatives to be proposed to HCA. This resulted in a very interesting exercise, and HCA was able to provide clear guidance to the WG in order to update the Prioritized Hydrographic Survey Plan, considering the information contained in national reports to HCA-8, as well as discussions / outcomes of the ad hoc meeting of HSPWG during HCA-8. The HSPWG is lead by UK with the participation of Argentina, Australia, Chile, Germany, Greece, Spain and USA. COMNAP and IAATO expressed heir willingness to participate and offered their support and contribution as observers.

The HCA decided to emphasize in the next IHO/HCA report to ATCM the relation between hydrography and the protection of the marine environment and also to insist on the importance of considering the concept under SOLAS V, regulation 9.

In brief, the HCA continues to contribute to the objectives of the IHO and to receive a strong support from international organizations for the establishment of a viable and prioritized hydrographic surveying program that could benefit the production of the INT Charts of the Antarctica.

The Commission agreed on several actions to be carried out during the intersessional period, with clear identification of the responsibilities and deadlines. Nevertheless, these actions to take place and be effective require the strong support from national authorities responsible for assigning priorities to the hydrographic work.

Following a kind invitation received from the Hydrographic Office of South Africa, the Commission decided to thank and accept it, and agreed to have the 9th HCA meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, 12-14 October 2009.