

TECHNICAL VISIT TO SAMOA APRIL 07

1. Executive Summary.

Representatives from the SWPHC and the IHB attended the 11th PacMA and 1st Meeting of Ministers for Maritime Transport in Samoa. These meetings deliberated on the application of a range of IMO based policies, programmes, standards and procedures for the Pacific. The hydrographic presentation was well received and a paper was submitted to PacMA with the recommendations adopted by the Ministers of Transport

A number of opportunities were found to improve capacity building in the Pacific. Improving communication on hydrography is relatively straight forward and easily achieved. Linking local hydrographers with other maritime administrators and the sharing of in-country resources such as vessels has considerable merit. Further technical visits to specific countries with operational National Maritime Coordination Committees are recommended. Longer term value is likely to be gained from assessing the most critical capacity building needs and matching them against internal resources, training opportunities, the availability of local vessels and equipment and the services major hydrographic authorities are able to supply.

Training opportunities described in IHO S-47 are not well known at this prevents countries from seeking access to teaching institutes through either scholarships or aid funding.

2. Background

The 2nd meeting of the Capacity Building Committee, held in Fiji in November 2004, determined that support, in the form of a technical visit, was to be provided to the small island states in the SWPHC. The original intent was to schedule a separate visit for each country however this proved to be logistically difficult. Based on the advice of Taulapapa Captain Maselino Tominiko of Samoa it was considered that presentations to the 11th Meeting of the Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA) and the 1st Meeting of Ministers for Maritime Transport would effectively target the most influential people in the region. John Spittal, Chair of the SWPHC, and Admiral Ken Barbor, IHB, travelled to Samoa and represented the IHO.

The PacMA meeting took place in Apia on the 17th and 18th April. The Minister's meeting followed on the 19th. A total of 17 countries and 8 associates and observers attended PacMA. The names and contact details are listed in Appendix 1. The Ministers meeting was attended by 16 countries. These are listed in Appendix 2.

The speaking time allocated to the SWPHC at the PacMA meeting was limited so time outside formal business was used to discuss hydrographic concerns with people from eastern Pacific countries. A meeting was held with Minister Ionatana Galway O'Brien and key officials from the Tokelau Administration on the 18th. Lunch and dinner discussions were held with Minister Paul Karalus of Tonga. Other discussions were held with officials from Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomons and Vanuatu. Arrangements were made with Captain John Hogan of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to promulgate IHO information emanating from the IHO and SWPHC.

3. Paper and Recommendations.

The IHO representatives were originally invited to present information to PacMA but it became apparent that a more effective approach was to submit a formal paper and have recommendations forwarded to the Minister's meeting for adoption. Admiral Barbor wrote a paper which was accepted and noted by PacMA delegates. This described the IHO, the SOLAS Convention and national hydrographic responsibilities, sustainable development of the seas around coastal states, UNCLOS considerations, natural disaster preparedness, S-55, the status of Pacific hydrographic skills and training opportunities.

The following summary was then submitted to the Ministers of Transport under Agenda Item 3 – Administration Issues.

States have obligations under the IMO Convention of Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) to provide for the safety of navigation of mariners operating in their national waters. This obligation includes the collection and distribution of safety of navigation; the collection and compilation of hydrographic data; and the publication, dissemination and keeping up-to-date of nautical information necessary for safety of navigation. Constituting a National Hydrographic Committee that will address the responsibilities, authority, communication mechanisms, coordination of the various activities concerned with the safety of navigation, within the State would be advantageous. States could participate in the South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC) where numerous capacity building arrangements can be availed from the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) through bilateral cooperative arrangements. Examples are the sharing of surveying to either hydrographic or near hydrographic standards, use of vessels in other Ministries or agencies and exchanging information on hazards. The improvement of hydrographic services in the region requires the commitment of States to adequately resource this endeavour but the return in the sustainable development will be substantial and enduring.

The recommendation put to Ministers was:

- f) *Endorse the investigation of the benefits of participation of States in the SWPHC where their capacity building needs can be addressed by the IHO and support the sharing of hydrographic and surveying data and information.*

Ministers agreed with the recommendation and formally signed it off along with many others on other maritime issues.

The official communiqué stated that:

Para 9 *Ministers supported the sharing of hydrographic and surveying data and information.*

Para 10 *Ministers endorsed the investigation of the benefits of participation of States in the SWPHC where their capacity building needs can be addressed by the IHO*

The signed approval of the Transport Ministers is an important foundation for further discussions with regional hydrographic authorities. It provides the authority to share data, to consider participating in the SWPHC and to engage in CBC initiatives.

4. Key Observations.

A number of points emerged that are important to hydrography in the region. These are:

- Benefit can be gained by including hydrography in main stream maritime administrative activities. These are well organised and operate through established fora such as PacMA and SPC. They do not generally include hydrography which tends to sit apart from policies and

programmes falling under the IMO umbrella.

- Maritime managers in a number of countries have greater staff and equipment resources than is normally found in hydrographic authorities, where they exist. Vanuatu, for example, has two or three GPS equipped vessels well suited to inshore hydrographic surveys. Indications were that vessels can be made available to local hydrographers at a moderate cost. There may be opportunities to combine surveying with other activities such as seamanship training or transits between islands.
- A number of countries are establishing National Maritime Coordination Committees. These have not generally included hydrographers but there is a willingness to do so in the future. This can be a very useful way of raising the profile and importance of hydrography within a country.
- Many regional maritime authorities have contributed to regulatory and standard setting work programmes initiated by PacMA and the SPC. Vanuatu, PNG and Samoa have been very active and have produced a range of documents that were adopted by many countries. These have included training standards, ship survey guidelines and auditing procedures. There is an active pool of expertise in the larger States that can readily deal with similar initiatives emanating from the IHO and the SWPHC.
- Benefit is likely to be gained by inviting both local hydrographers and maritime managers to SWPHC meetings. Often the maritime authorities are located in a different organisation to the hydrographers. There can be a disconnect between the two that limits communication. . One Transport Minister indicated that he would attend the XVII Conference as his country's hydrographic authorities are unable to do so.
- SPC is very willing to work with the SWPHC to communicate information on hydrographic programmes, standards, activities, issues and concerns. An invitation has been extended to the SWPHC to provide material for a column in an SPC quarterly publication.
- It is likely that some form of regional co-ordination of hydrography would be very beneficial. All countries have important needs and a lack of resources. An overall assessment of all needs and an analysis of the most critical to be addressed could be a useful first step in effectively directing capacity building. These can then be matched against internal resources, training opportunities, the availability of local vessels and equipment and the services major hydrographic authorities are able to supply.
- There is a general lack of awareness of training opportunities and scholarships available to regional hydrographers. IHO Publication S-47 is not well known and there have been few occasions where the training it lists is sought. More use does seem to be made of military assistance. Tonga is a case in point. There is a need to better inform maritime and hydrographic administrations on training opportunities and to endorse suitable candidates seeking scholarships.

5. Proposed Actions.

Base on the decisions made by the Regional Ministers of Transport the following actions will be submitted to the CBC and SWPHC for consideration:

a) *Liaison*

- The SWPHC joins PacMA as an Associate Member. The Chair should attend the annual meetings and present papers and resolutions on regional hydrographic issues.
- PacMA is invited to join the SWPHC as an Observer. A representative should be encouraged to fully participate in meetings.
- SPC should continue to be invited to send Observers to the SWPHC.
- The SWPHC provides hydrographic material for a SPC quarterly publication on Pacific maritime issues.
- Pacific maritime administrators are invited to join their national hydrographic delegations at future SWPHC meetings.
- Participation in IHO conferences and working groups is extended to Pacific maritime administrators when national hydrographers are unable to attend.

b) *Co-ordination*

- The SWPHC provides contact details and communication channels to assist Pacific hydrographers to participate in their countries' National Maritime Coordination Committees.
- CBC could consider further technical visits to those countries which have operational National Maritime Coordination Committees and see benefit in including hydrographic matters.
- CBC and SWPHC could consider a project to identify and prioritise Pacific hydrographic needs and determine where the most effective capacity building can occur. A second project can then be undertaken to match available resources and opportunities at a local, regional and an international level.
- CBC and SWPHC should better promulgate the training opportunities described in IHO S-47 and find ways to encourage and endorse Pacific candidates seeking both scholarships and aid funded access to teaching institutions
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