

**CIRCULAR LETTER 45/1999**  
**17 September 1999**

**S-23 - IDENTIFICATION OF "SOUTHERN" OR "ANTARCTIC OCEAN"**  
**Responses to Circular Letter 26/1999**

Dear Sir,

Twenty-eight replies to CL26/1999 have been received. With the exception of Argentina, there is total support for the proposal to give a single name to the sea areas surrounding the Antarctic. Eighteen Member States agree that this area should be called "Southern Ocean", although there are several well-argued cases that the term "Antarctic Ocean" should be used. It appears that the trend of modern use is towards the former name, and it is intended to use this in the next draft of S-23.

There is less agreement on the northern limit for the area, although there is unanimous support for a fixed limit. The Australian proposal has received support from only 5 Member States, and likewise the limit, defined in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of S-23, has been supported by only 3 Member States. This has left the choice between 60° south latitude and 50° south latitude. 14 Member States provide support for the former and 7 Member States for the latter. Although this is far from unanimous support, the argument raised by some Member States for 60° south latitude as a limit of the Antarctic Treaty and also as the limit of the INT Chart region M suggest the use of 60° as a northern limit for the new Main Area "Southern Ocean", to be defined in the draft of S-23.

The implication of the above choice has yet to be studied in detail, but the fact that 60° south latitude runs entirely through an area that is practically free of land should make the rearrangement of the draft S-23 fairly straightforward.

It may be recognized by the Member States that the above choice has been made to permit the restructuring of S-23 to proceed, and Member States may still give their views when the total draft is presented to them. A matter that has given the Directing Committee thought concerning this publication is the fact that according to the established voting procedures of the IHO, each Member State has equal persuasion on technical matters. In the case of nomenclature it would seem reasonable that, in the naming of oceans and seas, some additional weight could be given based on the proximity of the area to the Member States' land territory. However, an unambiguous formula to support this idea would be difficult to achieve.

On behalf of the Directing Committee,  
Yours sincerely,

Commodore John W. LEECH  
Director