

**REQUEST FROM INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
FOR OBSERVER STATUS AT THE IHO**

Dear Hydrographer,

Discussions at the 15th meeting of the Committee on Hydrographic Requirements for Information Systems (CHRIS) and the following "Industry Days" Workshop noted the importance of including concerns outside the realm of the Hydrographic Office in the workings of the IHO. CHRIS and its subsidiary bodies benefit first by the technical expertise these concerns bring to the workings of the committee and secondly, by their point of view as user or implementer of the end product. The Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) also recognizes the need to open the proceedings of the IHO to these outside concerns and is drafting procedures for accrediting these activities as observers to the IHO.

In anticipation of the accreditation process being adopted, the Navigational Electronic Chart System Association (NECSA) and the International Council of Cruise Liners (ICCL) have applied for observer status. Additionally, other nongovernmental organizations such as the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the Comité International Radio-Maritime (CIRM) are also expected to apply for observer status. Finally, the IHO has a memorandum of understanding with other intergovernmental organizations such as the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) whereby observer status is granted to the conferences of the IHO.

In the opinion of the Directing Committee, the deliberations of the Worldwide Electronic Navigational Chart Database Committee (WEND), CHRIS and their subsidiary bodies would benefit from the proactive inclusion of these observers. Therefore, the Directing Committee intends to issue invitations to such organizations as above to participate in upcoming WEND and CHRIS meetings. Observer status for these international nongovernmental organizations will be reviewed by Member States when adopting the procedures for accrediting observers and defining their relationship with the IHO.

Your comments on this matter are welcomed.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Rear Admiral Kenneth BARBOR
Director