



IHB Files S3/0112 + S3/0123

CIRCULAR LETTER No. 02/2005
5 January 2005

TSUNAMI IN ASIA

Dear Hydrographer,

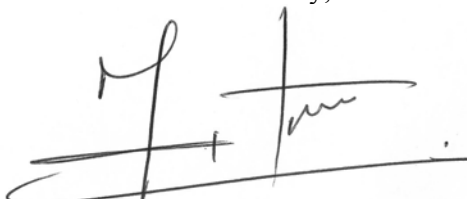
The catastrophic earthquake and resulting tsunami has inflicted unprecedented damage and suffering upon several of our Member States. The world community is responding with aid in an attempt to address the immediate needs of the people of the region. From a humanitarian perspective, the Directing Committee, on behalf of the IHO, has conveyed, in an email to the affected Member States dated 28 December 2004, our deepest sorrow for the tragic loss of life and destruction of property. From a professional perspective, the IHO must now look to what measures it can undertake with respect to possible problems affecting the safety of navigation in the region.

In February 2005, both the North Indian Ocean Regional Hydrographic Commission and the East Asia Hydrographic Commission are scheduled to meet. As these regional commissions cover the affected area, these meetings provide excellent opportunities to assess what measures are needed and what capacity the Member States within the region possess to meet these needs. The Directing Committee requests that the Chairmen of these regional commissions include, as a new agenda item, the emerging needs of the region due to the effects of the earthquake and tsunami. The results of these discussions will determine what follow-on actions are warranted.

Mr. Ariyawansa, the Hydrographer of Sri Lanka, has advised the Directing Committee that his survey craft with installed multibeam sonar was lost during the tsunami and he has yet to assess the magnitude of survey requirements resulting from the tsunami. Similarly, the IHB is aware of only one advisory (issued for damaged NAVAIDs and port facilities with possible wrecks and obstructions in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands) issued as a result of the tsunami. In some measure, the efficiency of the relief operations will depend on providing international shipping an adequate level of nautical information.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Cc: Chairmen, RHCs