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**CIRCULAR LETTER 34/2006
27 March 2006**

**OUTCOME OF THE 10th SESSION OF IMO'S SUB-COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS, SEARCH AND RESCUE (COMSAR 10).**

Reference: IHO CL 115/2005 dated 15 November 2005

Dear Hydrographer,

COMSAR 10 was held at IMO Headquarters in London from 6 -10 March 2006. Admiral Maratos (President), Steve Shipman, (PAH) and Peter Doherty (Chairman of CPRNW) represented the IHO. The following NAVAREA Coordinators were present: NAVAREA 1 (UK); NAVAREA II (France); NAVAREA III (Spain) and NAVAREAS IV and XII (USA).

Under Agenda Item 3, Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) COMSAR considered, amongst others, the following papers:

- a. COMSAR 10/3 from the Russian Federation regarding the establishment of new NAVAREAS in Arctic waters. The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) had also passed paper MSC 80/13/2 from the Russian Federation, on the same subject, to COMSAR for consideration.
- b. COMSAR 10/3/1 submitted by the IHO and reporting on the outcome of the CPRNW7 meeting held in September 2005. Reference A.
- c. COMSAR 10/3/2 submitted by the Chairman of the NAVTEX Co-ordinating Panel reporting on NAXTEX matters arising since COMSAR 9. The Chairman of the Panel also reported verbally on the successful outcome of the NAVAREA III co-ordination meeting held at the IHB in January 2006.
- d. COMSAR 10/3/3 Report of the CG on Tsunami matters submitted by Japan.

The Sub-committee established a joint IMO / IHO / WMO Correspondence Group (CG) under the Chairmanship of Peter Doherty, Chairman of CPRNW, to consider the provision of MSI services in Arctic Waters and report back to COMSAR 11. The TOR of the CG are at Annex A. Any Member State wishing to be represented in the CG should inform the Chairman, Peter Doherty, by email at doherty@nga.mil with a copy to sshipman@ihb.mc.

The Sub-committee endorsed the view that IOC are the lead authority on Tsunami Warning Systems and agreed that IMO, IHO and WMO should be represented at the IOC Executive Council meeting in June 2006 where this matter will be on the Agenda. Captain Gorziglia, IHB Director, will represent the IHO at this meeting.

COMSAR 9 established a CG to review IMO resolution A.888 (21), "Criteria for the provision of mobile-satellite communication systems in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)". This was required to permit the provision of satellite services by companies other than Inmarsat. The outcome of the CG was reported in document COMSAR 10/5. Following an in depth discussion it was clear that a majority supported the revised text of the resolution prepared by the CG and approved its submission to MSC 81 for further consideration and action as appropriate.

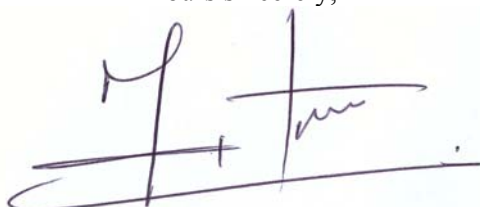
The report of COMSAR 10 to the Maritime Safety Committee, COMSAR 10/16, will be placed on the IHO web site as soon as it is issued by IMO.

The President took the opportunity of COMSAR to meet with the Director of the IMO Maritime Safety Division and the Secretary General of IALA to discuss progress with the joint action plan they established following the Tsunami of 26 December 2004. It was established that some funding from the IMO Tsunami Appeal Fund might be available to assist in the purchase of Hydrographic Equipment. The President raised this issue during the meeting of the NIOHC in Sri Lanka from 14 – 16 March 2006 and actions are now underway to provide some support to Sri Lanka.

The CG reviewing the WNWNS documentation, set up at the 7th meeting of CPRNW in September 2005, took the opportunity of several members attending COMSAR 10 to hold a review meeting from 13 – 15 March, the week following COMSAR. Representatives from France, Japan, Russian Federation, Sweden, USA, UK, Inmarsat, IMSO and IHB attended the meeting. The meeting decided to concentrate on reviewing the two top level documents, IMO resolutions A.705 (17) (Promulgation of Maritime Safety Information) and A.706 (17) as amended (World-Wide Navigational Warning Service) for submission to COMSAR 11. As any amendments to these resolutions made at COMSAR 11 would have a consequential effect on the other documents i.e. IMO publication I910 (Maritime Safety Information); IMO Publication IC951 (Navtex Manual); IMO Publication IA908 (International SafetyNET Manual); IHO Special Publication S-53 (Joint IMO/IHO World-wide Navigational Warning Service Guidance Document) and IHO Special Publication S-53 Appendix 1 (Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information) it was decided to postpone consideration of these until after COMSAR 11. The results of the meeting will be passed to all members of CPRNW for further consideration before forwarding to Member State and COMSAR 11.

On behalf of the Directing Committee

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'A. Maratos', written over a horizontal line.

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Encl: Annex A

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE JOINT IMO/IHO/WMO CORRESPONDENCE
GROUP ON MSI SERVICES**

Taking into account resolution A.706 (17), as amended by MSC/Circ.685 and MSC/Circ.750 including the relevant decisions of COMSAR 10, the joint IMO/IHO/WMO Correspondence Group on MSI Services should give consideration and provide comments on the following:

- .1 recommend a way forward to deal with the expansion of MSI services taking account of documents MSC 80/13/2 and COMSAR 10/3 (Russian Federation), COMSAR 10/3/1 (IHO) and observations from other countries in the Arctic regions;
- .2 in progressing the matter also consider the following additional salient issues:
 - .1 Should there be a northern limit to any new areas?
 - .2 Can a seasonal service only be provided?
 - .3 Who will act as NAVAREA co-ordinator and METAREA issuing service (do not have to be same country)?
 - .4 Would some of the proposed new NAVAREAs be better established as sub-areas of existing NAVAREAs?
 - .5 How will warnings be transmitted, and can they be monitored as required? Do systems other than Inmarsat (such as HF NBDP, NAVTEX or other satellite service providers) need to be considered?
 - .6 Who will undertake provision of SAR information?
 - .7 How will Inmarsat system definition manual and existing SafetyNET terminals be updated to allow receipt of the new NAVAREAs? Ideally this update needs to be co-ordinated with plans to include new areas in other parts of the world.
 - .8 Will assistance be required from IHO/CPRNW to support new NAVAREA co-ordinators or from JCOMM/ETMSS for METAREA issuing services?
 - .9 How will WWNWS guidance and other relevant documents be updated?
- .3 prepare a report for COMSAR 11.