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INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE FOR GLOBAL MAPPING (ISCGM)

Dear Hydrographer,

The Chairman of the International Steering Committee for Global Mapping (ISCGM) invited the IHO to attend the ISCGM-13 that took place at the Instituto Geografico Militar (IGM), Santiago, Chile, on the 11th November 2006, as one of the side meetings associated to the IX International Earth Science Congress. Captain Gorziglia, IHB Director, taking advantage of his presence in Chile for the 6th Hydrographic Committee on Antarctic Meeting, attended ISCGM-13 representing the IHO.

Global Mapping has its roots in the Agenda 21. Agenda 21, calling for an action program for addressing global environment challenges to support sustainable economic development, was resolved at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992. The Agenda 21 clearly announced that geographically specific spatial information is critical for understanding current status of global environment and monitoring changes. To this end, in 1992, Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport began to advocate the Global Mapping concept. The fundamental basis of this concept is to develop global scale geographic information through international cooperation.

Global map thematic data sets will provide coverage of the whole land area on earth at 1 km resolution in a consistent manner. Each thematic data set is released to the public in a digital format for easy handling by computer and its content is equivalent to conventional maps at scales of 1: 1,000,000. The layers considered initially are: elevation, vegetation, land-cover, land-use, transportation, drainage systems, boundaries and population centers.

The primary purpose of the "International Steering Committee for Global Mapping" is to examine measures that concerned national, regional and international organizations can take to foster the development of Global Mapping in order to facilitate the implementation of global agreements and conventions for environmental protection as well as the mitigation of natural disasters and to encourage economic growth within the context of sustainable development.

In brief the objectives of the project are:

- Provide proper chart coverage for the coordination of humanitarian, educational and environmental tasks in developing countries.
- Facilitate the decision making process, aimed at sustainable development.
- Constitute a common cartographic base for those projects or replies to emergencies requiring an international cooperation.
- Supplement other international projects of exchange and integration of data, capabilities and technologies, especially geo-spatial data infrastructure.

The first version of the Global Mapping (Version 0) is available for free on the ISCGM web site. This preliminary version will be replaced progressively by the contribution of the countries participating in this initiative, mainly through their National Mapping Agencies that are producing Version 1. The Committee is developing Version 2 that will include other layers whose relevance is in the process of evaluation. Probably one of those layers will be bathymetry.

Until now there have been only informal meetings between the IHB and the ISCGM. This has been the first time the ISCGM formally invites the IHO to provide a presentation about the Organization to the meeting of the Steering Committee. The presentation was very well received, as the great majority of participants did not know about IHO. After the presentation several questions were raised and appreciation was expressed on the experience shared as regard to our GEBCO project. There is no doubt that the Global Mapping project might benefit from GEBCO, the International Bathymetric Charts (IBC's) and the IHO Digital Bathymetric Data Center. It would be nonsense to establish another project to develop a bathymetric layer.

As a result of this meeting, the IHO representative concluded that:

- a) Considering that Global Map relies on National Mapping Agencies it seems relevant to make HOs aware of this project, inviting them to contact their national body dealing with the preparation of the 1:1.000.000 data set to facilitate, if agreed, the preparation of the sea bottom bathymetric layer.
- b) As one of the potential layers might be "sea elevation data" (bathymetry), it is important for the IHO to keep the contact with the ISCGM aiming to contribute to this layer through GEBCO and also through the IBCs. It would be important to invite ISCGM to attend the next GEBCO Guiding Committee Meeting and meeting of its two Sub Committees.
- c) The IHB should study the specifications being modified by ISCGM and provide advice on the elements related to IHO competence.

Following this advice, the IHB Directing Committee has decided to inform Hydrographic Offices about this project and to invite them to consider discussion with their National Cartographic Agencies on the way cooperation could be sought as regard to this project, if needed.

For the time being another couple of concrete actions have been identified by the IHB. One is to review, within the IHO area of competence, the ISCGM specifications for the Global Mapping. This task will be done by the IHB and its aim is to avoid duplication and to seek for standardization.

A second action identified for the IHB is to continue progressing this new relationship with ISCGM, and to request the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) to consider this matter in the agenda of their next meeting; to invite the Chairman of the ISCGM to brief GGC on the Global Mapping project and to provide guidance on the way the IHO could provide support to the Global Mapping project, in the IHO's area of competence, keeping in mind that this could be a concrete IHO contribution to the objectives of the Agenda 21.

Your comments are welcome.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA
Director