



IHB File No. CBC-1

**CIRCULAR LETTER No. 41/2007
26 April 2007**

NATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC REGULATIONS

Dear Hydrographer,

Capacity Building (CB) is defined as the process whereby the Organization assesses and assists States in sustainable development and improvement of their capacities, in order for them to meet the objectives of the IHO, as well as to comply with the Hydrographic, Cartographic and Maritime Safety obligations and recommendations laid down in UNCLOS, SOLAS V and other international texts. Capacity Building is considered by the IHO as a strategic objective.

Since 2003, when the IHO Capacity Building Committee was established, several objectives have been achieved: definition of an IHO CB strategy; the creation of a Capacity Building Fund used to support requests from developing countries; development of a Management Plan which includes CB demands coming from Regional Hydrographic Commissions and the preparation of annual CB work programmes.

One of the most fundamental tasks carried out by the CBC has been the provision of support to help developing countries set up a National Hydrographic Office. Most IHO Member States' Hydrographic Offices were created by a national law or decree which states its mission, functions, organization, funding, relations with other agencies, etc. The compilation of these various administrative regulations has been identified as an important source of information to assist those countries which are in the process of developing their own legislation with regard to hydrography, nautical cartography, safety to navigation and other related activities.

The creation of National Hydrographic Committees (NHC) or other similar coordinating bodies has also been recommended and the concept is strongly supported by developing countries. A NHC seeks to improve the relationship between all the national agencies involved, either producers or users of hydro-cartographic and marine safety information products and services. Recent technical visits to countries have revealed that representatives from the various national institutions participating in the round-table discussions, organized to explain the importance of hydrography to safety to navigation, safety of life at sea, protection of the marine environment and many other activities, met for the very first time. They were not aware of the contribution hydrography could make to their work and the concept of establishing a NHC or similar body has received a lot of support.

As in the case of the establishment of a National Hydrographic Office, the IHB believes that it would also be very useful for many developing countries who wish to set up their own National Hydrographic Committee to have examples of national legislation creating a NHC or a similar body.

For the reasons explained above, you are kindly invited to send to the IHB **by 30 June 2007** (marked for the attention of Captain Hugo Gorziglia, Director responsible for Capacity Building and CBC Chairman) copies of national regulations that may be used as a reference in establishing a National Hydrographic Office and/or a National Hydrographic Committee. The IHB intends to compile the information supplied and place it on the IHO web site under Capacity Building, for the benefit of those countries in the process of creating such national institutions.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'H. Gorziglia', written in a cursive style.

Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA
Director