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**CIRCULAR LETTER 39/2008
25 April 2008**

**OUTCOME OF THE 12TH SESSION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION'S (IMO)
SUB-COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE (COMSAR 12)**

Dear Hydrographer,

1 COMSAR 12 was held at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London from 7 - 11 April 2008 due to the refurbishment of the IMO Head Quarters. The refurbishment of the IMO HQ has now been completed and meetings will return to IMO HQ, commencing with Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) 84 (7 -16 May 2008).

2 Admiral MARATOS (President), Steve SHIPMAN, (PAH) and Peter DOHERTY (Chairman of CPRNW) represented the IHO at COMSAR12. The following NAVAREA Coordinators were present: NAVAREA 1 (UK); NAVAREA II (France); NAVAREA III (Spain), NAVAREAs IV and XII (USA), NAVAREA IX (Pakistan) NAVAREAs XVII and XVIII (Canada) and NAVAREA XIX (Norway). In his opening address the Secretary General of IMO thanked the IHO for their ongoing support in all areas of common interest and the GMDSS in particular.

3 GMDSS
COMSAR considered, amongst others, the following papers:

COMSAR 12/3/1 Outcome of CPRNW9 submitted by the IHO. The report was noted.

.1 COMSAR 12/3/2 Review of resolutions A.705(17) and A.707(17) submitted by IHO, the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as approved by IHO CL 119/2007 dated 14 December 2007. The proposed amendments were approved by COMSAR with the minor addition of a sub paragraph ".17 security related requirements" to section 4.2.1.3 of resolution A.706(17). The revised resolutions will now go to MSC 85 in late 2008 for adoption. The manner of the approval process within COMSAR 12 is a testament to the excellent work undertaken by CPRNW and its WG on the WNWNS Documentation.

.2 COMSAR 12/3/3 Amended List of NAVAREA Co-ordinators submitted by IHO. This was approved and a revised IMO COMSAR Circular will be issued. Annex 1 to IHO publication S-53 has been amended.

.3 COMSAR 12/3/4 Report by the Chairman of the International NAVTEX Coordinating Panel. The report was noted.

.4 COMSAR 12/3/5 from the joint IMO/IHO/WMO Correspondence Group (CG) on Arctic MSI Services and 12/3/6 on the Promulgation of MSI to NAVAREAs in the Arctic submitted by Norway. The Sub-Committee endorsed the work and conclusions of the CG and considered that it would be necessary to continue the

work of the CG until such time as the new NAVAREAs / METAREAs were operational. The IMO/IHO/WMO CG was therefore re-established with the following revised ToR:

Taking into account resolutions A.705(17) and A.706(17) as amended including the relevant decisions of COMSAR 10, COMSAR 11 and COMSAR 12, the Joint IMO/IHO/WMO CG on Arctic MSI Services should give consideration and provide comments and recommendations relating to:

- a) the broadcast of MSI messages by each Arctic NAVAREA Coordinator / METAREA Issuing Service as well as the international coordination and monitoring of such messages;
- b) review Inmarsat's proposal with a view to identifying the preferred solution for up-dating the Inmarsat System Definition Manual (SDM) as well as to establish a timeline for updating the existing SafetyNET terminals to allow receipt of MSI within the new NAVAREAs including the current coverage gaps elsewhere in the world;
- c) determination of an implementation timeline for full Arctic MSI services;
- d) determination of the training, assistance, and support necessary to achieve full operational capability of Arctic MSI services as requested by the relevant Administrations and Data Providers; and
- e) submit its report to COMSAR 13.

4 Existing members of the CG will be consulted on future deliberations. Others interested in joining the CG should contact the Chairman, Peter DOHERTY, by email at Peter.M.Doherty@nga.mil with a copy to sshipman@ihb.mc.

5 E-Navigation

COMSAR 12 considered COMSAR 12/11, the report of the CG on E-Navigation, established by the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV). COMSAR 12 established a WG to consider the document. The outcome of the WG (COMSAR 12/WP4) which will be communicated to the NAV54 is also available on the IHO web site.

6 ITU Maritime Radio Communications matters

COMSAR in its consideration of document 12/4/4 submitted by the USA concerning radio spectrum requirements to support port safety and security decided, amongst other actions, to submit a liaison statement to the IHO and ISO which invites the IHO to review radio communication procedural requirements for the WWNWS for use in promulgating security level announcements for ship and port security needs, and inform the IMO in order that they may consider the need for radio spectrum requirements. This matter will be considered by CPRNW who will prepare a draft response for circulation to and approval by IHO Member States. The full text of the Liaison Statement will be in the COMSAR report to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), document COMSAR 12/15 which will be available from the IHO web site when it is issued by IMO.

7 CPRNW Working Group (WG) on the WWNWS Documentation

In order to take advantage of most members attending COMSAR 12 the CPRNW WG reviewing the WWNWS documentation, set up at CPRNW7 in September 2005 held a review meeting at the IMO temporary HQ during the week following COMSAR. Representatives from Canada, France, Norway, Spain, Turkey; UK, USA, Inmarsat, WMO and IHB attended the meeting. Now that the revised resolutions A.705 (17) as amended (Promulgation of Maritime Safety Information) and A.706 (17) as amended (World-Wide Navigational Warning Service) had been approved by COMSAR the WG reviewed the Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information and the corresponding IHO Publication S-53 to ensure consistency with these resolutions as well as preparing any other necessary amendments. These documents will now go to CPRNW 10 in August 2008 prior to circulation

to IHO and WMO Member States for agreement and subsequent submission of the MSI Manual to COMSAR.

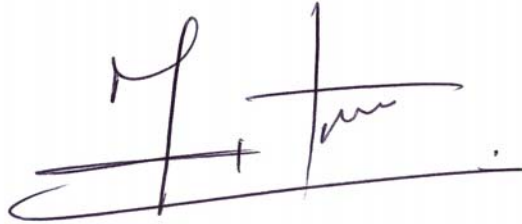
8 The WG gave preliminary consideration to draft amendments to the SafetyNET Manual which had been prepared by Inmarsat and for which the WG were very grateful. This manual and the Navtex Manual will be considered further once the work on the MSI Manual and S-53 have been approved by CPRNW.

9 COMSAR 13

COMSAR 13 is provisionally planned to be held at the IMO HQ in London from 19 - 23 January 2009. The CPRNW WG on the WNWNS Documentation will also meet at IMO HQ in the week following COMSAR13.

On behalf of the Directing Committee

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical line, with a smaller signature to the right.

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President