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CIRCULAR LETTER 9/2009
06 February 2009

**OUTCOME OF THE 13TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION'S (IMO)
SUB-COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE
(COMSAR 13)**

Dear Hydrographer,

- 1 COMSAR 13 was held at the IMO HQ in London from 19 – 23 January 2009.
- 2 Admiral Maratos (President), Steve Shipman, (PAH) and Peter Doherty (Chairman of PRNW) represented the IHO. The following NAVAREA Coordinators were represented: 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).
- 3 GMDSS
COMSAR considered, amongst others, the following papers:
 1. COMSAR 13/3/1. Revision of the Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information submitted by IHO and WMO. Some editorial corrections were agreed and COMSAR decided that section 7 of the Joint Manual containing examples of messages should be translated into other languages but that where the Joint Manual is published in languages other than English then Section 7 in English should be provided as an Annex. The support for the revised text and the manner of the approval process within COMSAR 13 is a testament to the excellent work undertaken by PRNW and its WG on the WWNWS Documentation.
 2. COMSAR 13/3/2 Amended List of NAVAREA Co-ordinators submitted by IHO. This was approved, with a minor correction to the NAVAREA XI details and a revised IMO COMSAR Circular will be issued. Annex 1 to IHO publication S-53 has been amended.
 3. COMSAR 13/3/3 Outcome of CPRNW10 submitted by the IHO. The report was noted.
 4. COMSAR 13/3/4 from the joint IMO/IHO/WMO CG on Arctic MSI Services. The Sub-Committee endorsed the work and conclusions of the CG and re-established the CG with the following revised ToR:
 - a) Monitor the testing of Arctic NAVAREAS / METAREAS including status, infrastructure, monitoring of messages and relationships with information providers (i.e. International Ice Patrol, METAREA Issuing Authorities, Search and Rescue authorities, National administrations and other NAVAREA Co-ordinators).
 - b) Facilitate the co-ordination of transmissions on the NAVTEX frequencies of 518 kHz, 490 kHz and 4209.5 kHz through the NAVTEX Co-ordinating Panel.
 - c) Facilitate the co-ordination of transmissions of SafetyNET messages through the International SafetyNET Panel, including identification of prospective Service Providers.
 - d) Determine NAVAREA/METAREA over-lap zone limits in the use of rectangular area addressing for SafetyNET.

- e) Develop Arctic NAVAREA / METAREA / NAVTEX coverage diagram including service areas and times of transmission.
- f) Monitor Inmarsat's progress on up-dating the System Definition Manual.
- g) Monitor the status of training, assistance and support to achieve operation capability of arctic MSI services.
- h) Provide a report to COMSAR 14.

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. COMSAR 13/3/5 Report by the Chairman of the International NAVTEX Coordinating Panel. The report was noted.

4 The relevant documents, including the final report to the MSC when available, will be posted on the IHO web site under "External Liaison (IMO) and/or PRNW".

5 During discussion at COMSAR questions were raised as to whether it was time, given modern technology, to review the GMDSS. It was indicated that a submission would be made to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) for the inclusion of a new Work Programme Item on a review of the GMDSS. The Chairman of the PRNW Sub-Committee agreed that PRNW should consider this matter at the next meeting of PRNW under its agenda item on Emerging Technologies.

6 Navtex Coordinating Panel Meeting

A meeting of the IMO Navtex Co-ordinating Panel was held on Thursday 22 January. The Chairman of the Panel is now Commander Tim Sewell of the UKHO. He has taken over from Commander Steve Godsiff who has retired. During the meeting it was noted that the IMO considered that, in the absence of any positive indication from the Caspian Sea littoral States, the SOLAS Convention should not be considered as applying to the Caspian Sea. It would therefore be inappropriate to designate the Caspian as a NAVAREA/METAREA or Sub-area unless there was agreement from the States concerned to do so.

7 PRNW WG on the WWNWS Documentation

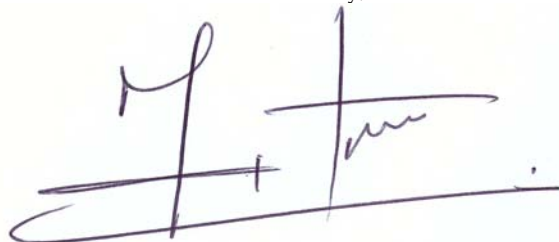
In order to take advantage of members attending COMSAR 13, the PRNW WG reviewing the WWNWS documentation, set up at CPRNW7 in September 2005, held a review meeting at the IMO HQ during the week following COMSAR. Representatives from France, Greece, UK, USA, WMO, Inmarsat and IHB attended the meeting. Now that the revised Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information has been approved by COMSAR and forwarded to the MSC for adoption, the WG focussed its attention on the International SafetyNET Manual basing its consideration on a revised text prepared by Inmarsat. The WG completed a first review and this document will now go to PRNW in August 2009 for consideration prior to circulation to Member States for agreement and subsequent submission to COMSAR 14 in 2010.

8 COMSAR 14

COMSAR 14 is provisionally planned to be held at the IMO HQ in London from 8 - 12 March 2010. The PRNW WG on the WWNWS Documentation will also meet at IMO HQ in the week following COMSAR14.

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