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CIRCULAR LETTER 48/2009
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11th MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION (IOC)
GLOBAL SEA LEVEL OBSERVING SYSTEM (GLOSS) GROUP OF EXPERTS, MAY 2009

Dear Hydrographer,

1 The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Global Sea Level Observing System (GLOSS) Group of Experts held their 11th meeting in Paris in May this year.

2 During the meeting concern was expressed that the number of tide gauge records being included in the Permanent Service for Mean Sea Level (PSMSL) database had reduced over the last 10 years. The PSMSL were also aware that some historical records going back over many years were in existence but not included in the database. This database is widely consulted by the academic and scientific communities and is an essential tool for the study of historical changes in sea level as well as for the prediction of future trends. Further information on the PSMSL is available from their web site: <http://www.pol.ac.uk/psmsl/>

3 In addition to the monthly and annual mean sea level data, there may also be historic tide gauge data in non-computer form (charts, tabulations etc.). These mostly paper-based data sets are potentially of great value to the sea level community in a range of applications, of which the most obvious is the extension of existing sea level time series as far back as possible in order to understand more completely the timescales of sea level change. Several years ago GLOSS and the IOC's International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) programme initiated a Data Archaeology Project aimed at assessing the volume of historical tide gauge data which could potentially be rescued and converted into computer-accessible form. Chart digitising has historically been a labour-intensive activity. However, the availability of new scanner-based packages provides the possibility for speeding up the work considerably.

4 Further information about the project can be found on the GLOSS web-site data page (www.gloss-sealevel.org/data/). If Member States have tide gauge data in this category then please contact the IHB to discuss possibilities for digitising these potentially valuable records. GLOSS Core Network Stations and other important sites (e.g., those with long records) should be regarded as priority sites.

5 Some Member States have contributed tidal data in the past and the PSMSL is very grateful for this. All Member States are urged to consider providing tide gauge information to the PSMSL. Please contact Dr Svetlana JEVREJEVA (sveta@pol.ac.uk) for further information on procedures etc.

6 The attention of Member States is also drawn to the relevant article: "Insight into Long Term Sea Level Change based on New Tide Gauge Installations at Takoradi, Aden and Karachi" which is published in the May edition of the International Hydrographic Review and available from the IHO web site by following the following link:

http://www.iho-ohi.net/mtg_docs/IHReview/2009/IHR_May2009_Article02_1.pdf

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President