



IHB File S3/3080

**CIRCULAR LETTER 27/2010
29 March 2010**

**OUTCOME OF THE 14TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION'S
(IMO)
SUB-COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE
(COMSAR 14)**

Dear Hydrographer,

- 1 COMSAR 14 was held at the IMO HQ in London from 8 - 12 March 2010.
- 2 Vice Admiral Alexandros Maratos (President), Steve Shipman, (PAH) and Peter Doherty (USA - Chairman of WNWNS) represented the IHO. The following NAVAREA Coordinators were represented: NAVAREA 1 (UK); NAVAREA II (France); NAVAREAs IV and XII (USA); NAVAREAs XVII and XVIII (Canada) and NAVAREA XIX (Norway).

GMDSS

- 3 COMSAR considered, amongst others, the following papers:
 - .1 COMSAR 14/3/1 Report by the Chairman (Peter Doherty - USA) on the outcome of the 1st meeting of the IHO WNWNS Sub-Committee which took place at the IHB from 18-21 August 2009. The report was noted.
 - .2 COMSAR 14/3/2 Amended List of NAVAREA Co-ordinators. Additional amendments to the entries for NAVAREAs II and VIII were agreed and the revised IMO COMSAR Circular will be issued in due course. Appendix 1 to IHO publication S-53 has been amended and is available for download from the IHO web site.
 - .3 COMSAR 14/3/4 on a review of IMO resolutions A.664(16) - Performance Standards for Enhanced Group Call (EGC) Equipment, and A.701(17) - Carriage of Inmarsat Enhanced Group Call SafetyNET Receivers under the GMDSS. COMSAR approved a revised text of A.664(16) which will go to the 87th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) in May for adoption as an MSC Resolution. The text approved by COMSAR is available in English, French and Spanish from the WNWNS page of the IHO web site. COMSAR concluded that resolution A.701(17) was now obsolete as the information was included in resolution A.706(17), as amended, and SOLAS Chapters IV and V and invited the Secretariat to take the necessary action to revoke the resolution.
 - .4 COMSAR 14/3/5 on the draft Revised International SafetyNET Manual. COMSAR prepared a few editorial amendments to the submitted draft manual and this will now go to MSC87 in May for adoption. The text as approved by COMSAR in English, French and Spanish is available from the WNWNS page of the IHO web site.

.5 COMSAR 14/3/6 Report by the Chairman (Cdr. Tim Sewell - UK) of the International NAVTEX Coordinating Panel. The report was noted.

.6 COMSAR 14/3/7 from the Chairman (Peter Doherty - USA) of the joint IMO/IHO/WMO Correspondence Group (CG) on Arctic MSI Services. The Sub-Committee endorsed the work and conclusions of the CG. The IHO through its WNWNS Sub-Committee was invited to monitor the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) testing and the transition to Full Operational Capability (FOC) and to provide guidance and assistance as appropriate. The IHO and WMO were invited to report on progress at COMSAR 15 in 2011.

.7 COMSAR 14/3/8 Proposal by the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) for the issue of an MSC Circular on "Guideline on operational procedures for the promulgation of Maritime Safety Information concerning acts of piracy and piracy counter-measure operations". The text of an MSC Circular was approved and will now go to MSC87 in May for adoption. The text approved by COMSAR is available in English, French and Spanish from the WNWNS page of the IHO web site.

4 The MSC at its 86th session had agreed to a new work programme item for COMSAR to carry out a "Scoping exercise to establish the need for a review of the elements and procedures of the GMDSS." Although this had not been put on the Agenda for COMSAR 14 several States submitted related documents under Agenda Item 7 "Developments in maritime radiocommunication systems and technology." COMSAR prepared a document COMSAR14/WP.5/Add.1 reflecting currently available information on the subject. It is intended that this document be used as a basis for discussion at the forthcoming Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group meeting, planned for 14-16 September 2010, and for submissions to be made to COMSAR 15. This WP is available from the IHO web site under External Liaison > International Organization Documents > IMO.

E-Navigation

5 COMSAR established a WG to consider the report from the IMO NAV CG on e-Navigation. The IHO informed the WG of the adoption of S-100 - Universal Hydrographic Data Model. COMSAR agreed that the CG should consider further the issue of a common data structure for information exchange and requested the IHO to provide relevant input to the CG. Ukraine in document COMSAR14/7 proposed the simplification of VHF DSC radiocommunications for navigators and for increasing DSC efficiency by integration of the DSC VHF radio equipment with vessel AIS-ECDIS systems. Whilst there was agreement that there were no technical constraints to implementing the proposal, some delegations expressed the view that this might require a revision of the ECDIS Performance Standard although Ukraine did not consider this to be the case. COMSAR concluded that the development of e-Navigation and the scoping exercise to establish the need for a review of the elements and procedures of the GMDSS should be harmonized and that there should also be an identification of the user needs for GMDSS. All relevant documents are available from the e-navigation / GMDSS Review web page which can be accessed from the IMO page referred to in paragraph 4 above.

6 The full report to the MSC (COMSAR14/17) will also be placed on the IMO documents page when issued by IMO.

WWNWS WG on the WNWNS Documentation

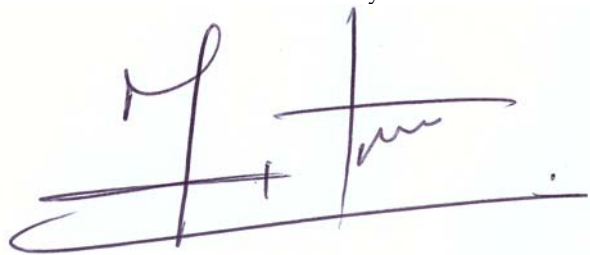
7 In order to take advantage of members attending COMSAR 14 the WNWNS Guidance Document Review WG, led by Peter Doherty (USA - Chairman of WNWNS), held a meeting at the IMO HQ during the week following COMSAR. Representatives from France, Greece, Norway, Turkey; UK, USA, WMO, Inmarsat and IHB attended the meeting. The WG very much appreciated the attendance by Mr Kevin Page of ICS Electronics Ltd who was able to provide important technical input to the meeting. Following the approval by COMSAR of the revised International SafetyNET Manual, the WG focussed its attention on the NAVTEX Manual using a draft revised text prepared by the secretary of the WG. This draft included amendments stemming from the already adopted revisions of IMO Resolutions A.705 (17) as amended, and A.706 (17) as amended; and the Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information. The format and structure of the manual was also amended to align with the now approved International SafetyNET Manual. The WG

completed a first review and this revised draft will now go to WWNWS2 in August 2010 for further consideration prior to circulation to Member States for agreement and subsequent submission to COMSAR 15 in 2011. It is anticipated that the second draft will be available from the WWNWS page of the IHO web site and circulated to WWNWS members around 1 June 2010.

COMSAR 15

8 COMSAR 15 is provisionally planned to be held at the IMO HQ in London from 7 - 11 March 2011. The WWNWS WG on the WWNWS Documentation will then meet at IMO HQ in the week following COMSAR15.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'A. Maratos', written over a light blue rectangular background. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President