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CIRCULAR LETTER 28/2011
28 March 2011

OUTCOME OF THE 15TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION'S
(IMO)
SUB-COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE (COMSAR 15)

Dear Hydrographer,

- 1 COMSAR 15 was held at the IMO HQ in London from 7 - 11 March 2011.
- 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 I (UK); NAVAREA II (France); NAVAREAs IV and XII (USA); NAVAREAs XVII and XVIII (Canada) and NAVAREA XIX (Norway).

GMDSS

- 3 COMSAR 15 considered, amongst others, the following papers:
 - a) COMSAR 15/3/1 submitted by the IHO reporting on the outcome of the 2nd meeting of the IHO WNWNS Sub-Committee held in Sydney, Australia from 9 - 13 August 2010. The report was noted.
 - b) COMSAR 14/3/2 submitted by IHO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) on the draft Revised NAVTEX Manual. COMSAR established a drafting group, under the chairmanship of Mr Peter DOHERTY (USA-NGA) to review the text. Five editorial amendments were prepared and agreed by the plenary session of COMSAR 15. The draft manual will now go to MSC89 in May 2011 for adoption. The amendments approved by COMSAR 15 are in Annex A.
 - c) COMSAR 15/3/3 submitted by IHO proposing amendments to COMSAR.1/Circ.51, List of NAVAREA Co-ordinators. Additional amendments to the entries for NAVAREA II (English and Spanish text only); and NAVAREAs IX and XIX 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. COMSAR 15 also supported a proposal from IHO that the IMO Secretariat be authorised to issue a revision to this COMSAR Circular upon receipt from IHO, or a NAVAREA Co-ordinator, of updated information, keeping the Sub-Committee informed of its actions and authorised the Sub-Committee accordingly. The intention is to ensure that the latest information on NAVAREA Co-ordinators' contact information is promulgated without delay.
 - d) COMSAR 15/3/5 submitted by the Chairman of IMO's NAVTEX Coordinating Panel (Cdr. Tim Sewell - UK and NAVAREA 1 Co-ordinator) reporting on the current issues being addressed by the Panel. The report was noted.
 - e) COMSAR 15/3/9 submitted by IHO and WMO on progress with Arctic MSI Services. The Sub-Committee noted the achievement of Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in July 2010 and the intention to move to Full Operational Capability (FOC) on 1 June 2011. The IHO and WMO were invited to report on the further development of Arctic MSI Services at COMSAR 16 in 2012. The successful establishment of the 5 new Arctic NAVAREAs / METAREAs was marked by a special session of the COMSAR 15 Sub-Committee which was addressed by Mr P DOHERTY (Chairman of the IHO WNWNS Sub-Committee), Mr E MITROPOULOS (Secretary General of the IMO), Mr M JARRAUD (Secretary General of WMO),

and Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS (President of the IHB). This was followed by a reception for COMSAR 15 delegates which was kindly sponsored by the Norwegian Coastal Administration and Inmarsat Global Ltd.

4 Following instruction from MSC88, COMSAR15 reviewed a proposal from the WMO for an IMO Assembly Resolution on the World-Wide Met-Ocean Information and Warning Service. This is intended to complement Resolution A.706(17), as amended, on the World-Wide Navigational Warning Service. The draft text as submitted in document MSC 88/23/9 was amended and a revised text passed back to MSC89 for approval and subsequent adoption by Assembly 27 in November 2011.

5 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." This matter was considered further by the Technical WG established at COMSAR15. It was decided to establish a Correspondence Group to progress this work and report back to COMSAR 16 in 2012 when the scoping exercise is due to be completed.

E-Navigation

6 COMSAR established a WG to consider the report from the IMO NAV CG on e-Navigation. The WG unanimously agreed that IHO's S-100 data model should be used as a baseline for creating a framework for data access and information services under the scope of e-Navigation. The WG also agreed that IMO, in consultation with other organizations, should consider the establishment of a Harmonization Group on creating a framework for data access and information services under the scope of SOLAS, based on the example of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on ECDIS. The WG developed draft Terms of Reference for the Harmonization Group on Data Model (HGDM), the text of which is attached at Annex B. These proposals were agreed by the plenary session of COMSAR 15 and will be considered further by the CG and reported to the fifty-seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV57).

7 The full report to the MSC (COMSAR15/16) will be placed on the IMO documents page of the IHO web site when issued by IMO.

WWNWS WG on the WWNWS Documentation

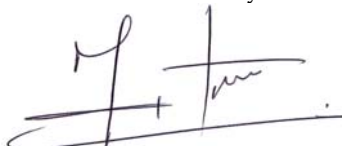
8 In order to take advantage of members attending COMSAR 15 the WWNWS Guidance Document Review WG, led by Mr. Peter DOHERTY (USA - Chairman of WWNWS), held a meeting at the IMO HQ during the week following COMSAR. Representatives from France, UK, USA, WMO, Inmarsat and IHB attended the meeting. Following the completion of the review of all WWNWS documents (IMO resolutions A.705(17), as amended; A.706(17), as amended; the joint IMO/IHO/WMO MSI Manual and IHO publication S-53; the International SafetyNET Manual; and the NAVTEX Manual, the WG reviewed all approved texts for consistency of terminology. A number of small inconsistencies have been noted. These will be reported to WWNWS3 in September and reviewed further in 2012 prior to any further submission to IMO COMSAR.

9 The WG also reviewed the draft agenda for WWNWS3 and updated the "List of Actions" from WWNWS2.

COMSAR 16

10 COMSAR 16 is provisionally planned to be held at the IMO HQ in London from 12 - 16 March 2012. The WWNWS WG on the WWNWS Documentation will then meet at IMO HQ in the week following COMSAR16.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Amendments to the NAVTEX Manual as published in document COMSAR15/3/2:

Section 1 GENERAL INFORMATION, first paragraph, last sentence, amend "his" to "their".

2.2.1.9 After *Maritime Safety Information* insert "(MSI)"

4.3 Delete and replace with:

"The provisions of the NAVTEX Manual apply to National NAVTEX Services on 490 kHz or 4209.5 kHz. When planning a National NAVTEX Service, the IMO NAVTEX Co-ordinating Panel is responsible for the allocation of B₁ transmitter identification characters; however, the establishment of NAVTEX service areas and the compulsory use of the English language are not required.

12.1 Amend "his" to "their" throughout the paragraph.

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE IMO/IHO HARMONIZATION
GROUP ON DATA MODEL (HGDM)**

In creating an e-navigation architecture, it is important to identify information and data flows, and the interaction between applications and user interfaces. Consequently, there needs to be a common data structure to implement the identified Information, which represents the maritime domain (and including both ship and shore aspects). It is therefore important to harmonize efforts in data modelling, with the aim of creating and maintaining a robust and extendable maritime data structure. This maritime information and data structure will require some form of overarching coordination to ensure the ongoing management and maintenance of the structure. There may be several management roles to be performed by such a coordinating body, (for example, the maintenance of a register). This management role may be shared between relevant organizations. [The structure is a highly important element by which e-navigation can modernize the operational environment of the maritime industry and also fulfil the requirement of document MSC 85/26, annex 20.]

[The IMO Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation agreed to establish a small group to work mainly by correspondence and in conjunction with IHO to further develop this common data structure in conjunction with ongoing efforts in data modelling. This would involve harmonization and standardization of:

- .1 formats for the collection, exchange and distribution of data;
- .2 processes and procedures for the collection; and
- .3 development of open standard interfaces.]

The HGDM group should be constituted of representatives of IMO and IHO Member States and Secretariats, and organizations with an official IMO/IHO observer status. The HGDM group reports to the IMO Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV), and to the IHO through the IHB Directing Committee. The HGDM group should:

- [.1 consider matters related to the framework for data access and information services under the scope of SOLAS, using as a baseline IHO's S-100 data model, as requested by IMO or IHO, and prepare appropriate documentation; and
- .2 review the results of studies by IMO, IHO and other related organizations which address aspects of access and information services under the scope of SOLAS, and advise IMO and IHO as to whether they are compatible with the e-navigation concept and take into account the identified dynamic user needs.]
