



IHB File No. S3/3075

CIRCULAR LETTER 36/2012
27 March 2012

**OUTCOME OF THE 16th SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION'S
(IMO)
SUB-COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE (COMSAR 16)**

Dear Hydrographer,

- 1 COMSAR 16 was held at the IMO HQ in London from 12 - 16 March 2012.
- 2 Vice Admiral Alexandros Maratos (President), Steve Shipman, (AD) and Peter Doherty (USA - Chairman of WWNWS) represented the IHO. The following NAVAREA Coordinators were represented: NAVAREA I (UK); NAVAREA II (France); NAVAREAs IV and XII (USA); and NAVAREA XIX (Norway).
- 3 The opportunity was taken to hold a short meeting to discuss matters of mutual interest with Mr Andrew Winbow, the new Director of the Maritime Safety Division of IMO.

GMDSS

- 4 COMSAR 16 considered, amongst others, the following papers:
 - a) COMSAR 16/3/2 submitted by the IHO reporting on the outcome of the 3rd meeting of the IHO WWNWS Sub-Committee held at the IHB in Monaco from 13 - 16 September 2011. The report was noted.
 - b) COMSAR 16/3/3 submitted by IHO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) proposing the cancellation of COMSAR/Circ.36 on the broadcast of warnings for tsunamis and other natural disasters with effect from 1 January 2013 when the final revised WWNWS publication, the NAVTEX Manual, enters into force. The cancellation of the Circular was approved.
 - c) COMSAR 16/3/4 submitted by IHO, WMO and IMSO proposing amendments to annex 8 of MSC.1/Circ.1382 on International SafetyNET Services within the GMDSS. The proposed amendments were agreed and the revised Annex 8 will now go to MSC90 for adoption.
 - d) COMSAR 16/3/7 submitted by the Chairman of IMO's NAVTEX Coordinating Panel (Mr Guy Beale - UK and NAVAREA 1 Co-ordinator) reporting on the current issues being addressed by the Panel. The report was noted and the Sub-Committee expressed its gratitude to Cdr Tim Sewell, the former Chairman of the Panel for his efforts over several years.
 - e) COMSAR 16/3 on the report of the CG considering the "Scoping exercise to establish the need for a review of the elements and procedures of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)." The Sub-Committee prepared a draft Work Plan for the "Revision

and Modernization of the GMDSS to be submitted to MSC 90 for adoption. It is envisaged that the review should be completed during the period 2013 - 2015 with the modernization plan being implemented in the period 2015 - 2017.

e-Navigation

5 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/11 on the report of the CG on the development of an e-Navigation implementation plan. COMSAR was asked to review and complete the Gap Analysis with regard to matters within its area of responsibility. This review of the Gap Analysis will be forwarded to the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation which is leading the work on e-Navigation.

Operating anomalies identified within ECDIS

6 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/16 submitted by the UK, IHO, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA) reporting on recently identified anomalies in the operation of ECDIS and asking in particular for assistance in communicating such information to mariners. The IHO indicated that it would consider this matter during its WWNWS document review meeting and make proposals to COMSAR 17. In the interim the Chairman of the WWNWS Sub-Committee would do all within his power to ensure that such messages were broadcast by all NAVAREA Co-ordinators. Further information on this topic is in IHB CL 33/2012.

COMSAR 16 Report

7 The full report to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) document COMSAR16/17 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 16 the WWNWS 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, Italy, UK, USA, WMO, Inmarsat and the IHB attended the meeting. The review considered all the WWNWS documentation with the intention of ensuring consistency of terminology. Amendments to resolutions A.705(17), as amended "*Promulgation of Maritime Safety Information*"; and A.706(17), as amended, "*World-Wide Navigational Warning Service*" will be considered by the WWNWS SC before submission to IHO Member States and subsequent submission to COMSAR 17 in 2013. Draft amendments to the MSI Manual to include the topic of ECDIS anomalies, see paragraph 6 above, were prepared. However, following consideration of the adoption in December 2011 of resolution A.1051(27) "*World-Wide Met-Ocean Information and Warning Service (WWMIWS)*", it was considered that a significant restructuring of the MSI Manual was required and this would require more time. It is intended that revisions of the MSI Manual, the International SafetyNET Manual and the NAVTEX Manual be prepared with submission to COMSAR 18 in 2014.

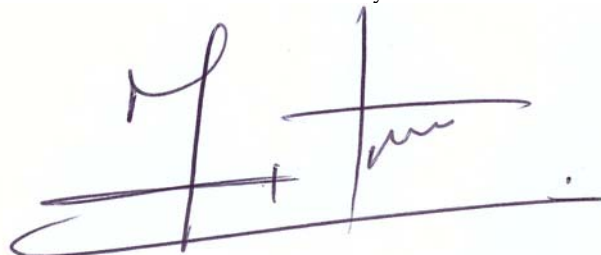
9 The WG also reviewed the draft agenda for WWNWS4; updated the "List of Actions" from WWNWS3; prepared a Navigational Message regarding the centenary of the loss of the R.M.S. Titanic in 1912 with the intention of having it broadcast by all NAVAREAs at 02.20 on 15 April, the time at which the Titanic sank; and as requested by WWNWS3 the WG also prepared a revised draft of the paper on "Contingency Planning" for finalisation at WWNWS4.

COMSAR 17

10 COMSAR 17 is provisionally planned to be held at the IMO HQ in London from 21 - 25 January 2013. The WWNWS WG on the WWNWS Documentation will then meet at IMO HQ in the week following COMSAR17. This, much earlier date than usual for COMSAR 17 means that there will

only be two weeks between the end of WWNWS4 and the final date for submission to COMSAR 17 of the draft amendments to resolutions A.705 and A.706 (see paragraph 8 above). It is therefore planned to complete the review by WWNWS by correspondence, with the subsequent consideration by IHO Member States, WMO and IMSO happening before the WWNWS4 meeting.

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, and a smaller signature to the right.

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President