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CIRCULAR LETTER 50/2014
09 July 2014

**REPORT ON THE 1ST SESSION OF THE IMO SUB-COMMITTEE ON NAVIGATION,
COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE (NCSR 1)**

References:

- A. IHO CL 22/2013 dated 14 March - *Counterfeit Charts and Nautical Publications.*
- B. IHO CL 41/2014 dated 27 May - *Preparation of the 1st Session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue.*
- C. IHO CL 42/2014 dated 11 June - *Report on the 93rd Session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee.*

Dear Hydrographer,

1. As announced in Reference B, the 1st session of the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR 1) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was held at the IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom, from 30 June to 4 July 2014. The IHO was represented by Director Gilles Bessero, Assistant Directors Anthony Pharaoh and David Wyatt, Mr Peter Doherty, the Chair of the World-Wide Navigational Warning Service Sub-Committee (WWNWS-SC) and Mr Chris Janus, Branch Chief, NGA Maritime Watch - NAVAREA IV/XII. Heads and representatives from fourteen Hydrographic Offices (Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, UK, and USA) also attended the meeting as part of their national delegations.

2. The Sub-Committee unanimously elected Captain Carlos Salgado (Chile) as Chair, and Mr Ringo Lakeman (Netherlands), as Vice-Chair, for 2014. The full report of NCSR 1 (NCSR 1/28) will be available on the IMODOCS website (<https://docs.imo.org/>) when issued.

3. This was the first session of the merged Sub-Committees on Safety of Navigation (NAV) and on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR).

4. The Agenda for NCSR 1 included the following items of interest to IHO Member States:

Agenda Item 3: Routeing of ships, ship reporting and related matters;

Agenda Item 4: Consideration of ECDIS matters related to the implementation of the carriage requirements in SOLAS Regulations V/19.2.10 and V/19.2.11;

Agenda Item 5: Consolidation of ECDIS-related IMO Circulars;

Agenda Item 7: Development of explanatory footnotes to SOLAS Regulations V/15, V/18, V/19 and V/27;

- Agenda Item 9: Development of an e-navigation strategy implementation plan;
- Agenda Item 12: Developments in Maritime Radiocommunications Systems and Technology;
- Agenda Item 13: Review and modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS);
- Agenda Item 15: Consideration of operational and technical coordination provisions of maritime safety information (MSI) services, including the development and review of related documents;
- Agenda Item 23: Development of a mandatory Code for ships operating in polar waters;
- Agenda Item 27: Any Other Business.

The relevant discussions are summarized hereinafter.

Agenda Item 3 - Routeing of ships, ship reporting and related matters

5. The Sub-Committee approved the establishment of two-way routes and a precautionary area at Jomard Entrance (Papua New Guinea) and amendments to the existing traffic separation schemes and routeing measures covering the Strait of Gibraltar (Morocco and Spain), the waters off Chengshan Jiao Promontory (China), off Friesland and North Hinder to German Bight (Netherlands) and the Great North-East Channel (Australia). The Sub-Committee also approved the revocation of an area to be avoided in the region of the Great Barrier Reef (Australia). These provisions will now be passed to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) for adoption at its 94th session in November 2014. Implementation will be not less than six months after adoption by the MSC.

6. The IHO made an intervention noting that not all submissions followed the guidance laid out in MSC.1/Circ.1060, as amended. At the request of the IHO, the Sub-Committee reminded IMO Member States to effectively consider the state of hydrographic survey and nautical charts in areas covered by proposed new or amended routeing measures. The Sub-Committee noted that the MSC Circular invited Governments who do not have the necessary hydrographic information to seek assistance from the relevant charting authority, either directly or through the IHO Secretariat. Further, the Sub-Committee reminded Governments that these considerations should take place at a very early stage in the preparation of submissions on routeing measures.

Agenda Item 4 - Consideration of ECDIS matters related to the implementation of the carriage requirements in SOLAS Regulations V/19.2.10 and V/19.2.11

7. The Sub-Committee considered that no additional work was required beyond that which was underway and reported in the IHO submissions (NCSR 1/4 and 1/4/1), and decided that the unplanned output was therefore completed. The Sub-Committee agreed that any further developments could be reported in the future under "Any Other Business". No adverse comments were raised by the Sub-Committee on the proposed arrangements for the transition to the next editions of the ECDIS standards, as agreed with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the Comité International Radio-Maritime (CIRM).

Agenda Item 5 - Consolidation of ECDIS-related IMO Circulars

8. The Sub-Committee considered and endorsed the draft MSC Circular on *ECDIS - Guidance for good practice* contained in the submission prepared by a number of Member States, in consultation with the IHO Secretariat (NCSR 1/5). The draft circular will be forwarded to the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) for review, in particular the provisions related to

ECDIS training and the use of simulators, and subsequent approval by the MSC. The full text of the draft MSC Circular will be annexed to the Sub-Committee Report, NCSR 1/28, when published.

Agenda Item 7 - Development of explanatory footnotes to SOLAS Regulations V/15, V/18, V/19 and V/27

9. The Sub-Committee decided not to take any further action on this item and agreed that the appropriate mechanism to address the issue of ECDIS software updates would be to amend the relevant SOLAS Regulations. The meeting agreed to invite the MSC to delete this unplanned output from its biennial agenda and invited Member Governments to submit proposals to the MSC for a new unplanned output on the development of appropriate amendments to SOLAS.

Agenda Item 9 - Development of an e-navigation strategy implementation plan

10. The Sub-Committee endorsed the draft e-navigation Strategic Implementation Plan proposed by the Correspondence Group on e-navigation (SIP – Annex to NCSR 1/9) and agreed to forward it to the MSC for approval. There was a long discussion on the role of the IMO in coordinating the future development of e-navigation and how to proceed with the implementation of the SIP tasks. It was recognized that the establishment of a website could help to promote information on e-navigation but in itself would not fulfil the coordination role which was seen as a vital requirement for the future progress of the e-navigation project, in accordance with the e-navigation strategy approved by MSC 85. The representatives of both the IHO and IALA confirmed that their organizations were ready to continue supporting the IMO with the future development of e-navigation, subject to the appropriate coordinating mechanisms being in place.

11. The Sub-Committee endorsed the draft *Guidelines on Harmonization of [e navigation] test beds reporting* and agreed to invite the MSC to approve it. The NCSR also agreed to establish a Correspondence Group (CG), coordinated by Australia, to combine and harmonize the draft Guidelines on: *Human Centred Design (HCD) for e-navigation systems, Usability Testing, Evaluation and Assessment (UTEA) for e-navigation systems and Software Quality Assurance (SQA)* into one single circular to avoid duplication and the need for cross-references. The report of this CG should be submitted to the second session of the Sub-Committee (NCSR 2).

12. An informal group of representatives from interested Member States and International Organizations, including Australia, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, USA, BIMCO, CIRM, IALA, ICS and the IHO, met in the margins of the NCSR session to discuss the way forward for the coordination of the implementation of e-navigation. The group agreed to coordinate submissions to MSC 94, with CIRM acting as the coordinator. Although consideration was given to activating the IMO-IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM) established at MSC 90, it was agreed that there were no identified work items within the Terms of Reference to justify it.

Agenda Item 12 - Developments in Maritime Radiocommunications Systems and Technology

13. The Sub-Committee considered a proposal submitted by the USA (NCSR 1/12) for the Iridium mobile-satellite system to be considered for recognition in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) in accordance with the criteria and guidance of IMO Resolution A.1001(25) and MSC.1/Circ.1414. The NCSR supported the recognition of new satellite service providers as part of the GMDSS, in general.

14. The NCSR supported the application by Iridium to be evaluated as a GMDSS mobile-satellite service provider and invited the MSC to consider and decide on which independent body should produce a technical and operational assessment and provide a report to the Sub-Committee for evaluation. It was also agreed that the MSC should consider convening a group of experts to participate in the evaluation process and provide technical advice. This should include requesting support from other international organizations, particularly the IHO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

Agenda Item 13 - Review and modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)

15. The Sub-Committee considered the elements related to the review and modernization of the GMDSS in the reports from the Joint Working Group between the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the IMO and from the Joint Expert Group between the IMO and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The NCSR endorsed the draft outline of the detailed review presented by the Correspondence Group (CG). The outline of the detailed review acknowledged that the on-going work in the IHO and WMO must be taken into account when addressing issues related to Maritime Safety Information.

16. The NCSR agreed to re-establish the CG under the coordination of the USA and tasked it to report on further progress to NCSR 2. Additionally the Sub-Committee agreed on the principle to coordinate this work item with the development of e-navigation; however the methodology on how to achieve this was not confirmed.

Agenda Item 15 - Consideration of operational and technical coordination provisions of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) services, including the development and review of related documents

17. The Sub-Committee considered the proposed amendments to the Joint IMO/IHO/WMO MSI Manual (IHO Publication S-53 - MSC.1/Circ.1310) submitted by the IHO and the WMO (NCSR 1/15/1/Rev.1). The NCSR endorsed the draft new edition with minor editorial amendments proposed by the Chair of WWNWS-SC. The Sub-Committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a revised draft MSC Circular on amendments to MSC.1/Circ.1310 for approval by MSC 94.

Agenda Item 23 - Development of a mandatory Code for ships operating in polar waters

18. As directed by MSC 93, the Sub-Committee completed its review of the outstanding parts of the draft International Code for ships operating in Polar Waters (the Polar Code) covering Safety of Navigation and Communications, Chapters 10 and 11 respectively (now re-numbered 9 and 10). These will be passed to MSC 94 for final endorsement and approval. This review does not affect those elements of specific interest to the IHO that were included in the draft Code agreed at the MSC 93 meeting, as reported in Reference C.

Agenda Item 27 - Any Other Business

19. The Sub-Committee noted a submission from the UK (NCSR 1/INF.9) on the proliferation of counterfeit nautical charts and publications (see Reference A). The paper provided information and advice on identifying such potentially unsafe products and encouraged Member States to follow whatever measures they considered appropriate.

20. The Sub-Committee noted a submission from Argentina (NCSR 1/INF.20) providing information on a project for the update of systems and equipment in Argentina to improve shore-ship radiocommunications. The potential improvements to the provision of MSI were welcomed.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2015

21. The Sub-Committee unanimously elected Captain Carlos Salgado (Chile), and Mr Ringo Lakeman (Netherlands), as Chair and Vice-Chair for 2015 respectively.

22. In the closing address the IMO Secretariat acknowledged the retirement of IHB Assistant Director Michel Huet among the list of recent or pending retirees who have contributed to the work of the IMO.

Dates for NCSR 2

23. NCSR 2 is currently scheduled to be held at the IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom, from 9 to 13 March 2015.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gilles Bessero', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Gilles BESSERO
Director