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CIRCULAR LETTER 27/2014
13 March 2014

**IHO HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION ON ANTARCTICA (HCA)
13th Conference, Cadiz, Spain, 3-5 December 2013**

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The *Instituto Hidrográfico de la Marina* (IHM) of Spain hosted the 13th Conference of the IHO Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) in San Fernando, near Cadiz, from 3 to 5 December 2013. Fifteen IHO Member States (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia (as Observer), France, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, UK and USA) were represented, as well as three Observer organizations (COMNAP, IAATO and IALA), two international projects (GEBSCO and IBCSO), one Observer from MSDIWG and three Expert Contributors from Caris, Fugro-Pelagos and Kongsberg Maritime. The [minutes of HCA-13](#) and all relevant documents are available on the IHO website (Home > Committees & WG > IRCC > HCA > 13th Conference).
2. IHO President Robert WARD chaired the Conference. Mr. John J. HAUTMANN, Jr. (USA) was re-elected as Vice-Chair.
3. The Commission reviewed progress since the previous Conference and received reports from COMNAP, IAATO, IALA, GEBSCO and IBCSO, as well as from the IHO Member States in the Commission. Presentations were also given by the Expert Contributors and the Observer from the MSDIWG. Each focused their presentations on the Antarctic environment.
4. Discussion at the Conference centred on the need to get more bathymetric data in the region, through collecting new data and better identifying existing data, noting that the waters surrounding Antarctica are over 95% unsurveyed. To this end, better coordination of surveys is required as well as the introduction of programmes using *ships of opportunity*. In this context, a document entitled “*IHO guidelines for the collection and rendering of hydrographic data by Ships of Opportunity operating in the Antarctic Region*”, prepared by a sub-group led by New Zealand, was adopted by the Commission. President Ward introduced details of a pilot project to use the concept of crowd-sourcing to address the lack of hydrographic data in all regions of the world, including Antarctica. The pilot project, led by the IHO Secretariat as a proof of concept study, will involve the collection of basic hydrographic data from a small number of vessels equipped with a simple, very low-cost data logger (costing about US\$ 200). The data will then be uploaded to the IHO Data Center for Digital Bathymetry (DCDB) where it will be made publicly available for subsequent viewing and use.
5. A concept proposal, described by the Expert Contributor from Fugro-Pelagos, to undertake LIDAR bathymetric surveys in selected areas of the Antarctic Peninsula using a combination of government and commercial resources was favourably received by the Conference. In this context, the Commission adopted the following declaration:

“In considering how to achieve its agreed survey and charting priorities for the Antarctic region, HCA encourages multi-party multi-disciplinary collaborative projects that involve government, IGO’s, NGO’s, industry and donor organizations. Such projects should, wherever possible:

- *maximise the benefits for all parties*
- *minimise costs by harnessing existing infrastructure*
- *incorporate multi-parameter data collection programmes from the same platform.*

In this context, the outline proposal paper (HCA13-07.2A) presented at HCA-13 is an example that might fulfill such requirements.”

6. The usefulness of maintaining a liaison with ATCM, through the provision of IHO reports and participation in ATCM meetings, was discussed. President Ward noted the lack of concrete results regarding ATCM actions and decisions to support hydrographic activities in Antarctica. However, the Conference agreed that continuing a campaign to raise awareness at the ATCM was important and that the engagement of national Hydrographers with their respective national delegates to ATCM was essential. It was decided that improved support from ATCM would be sought through Argentina paying a visit to the Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty in Buenos Aires and through the involvement of the ATCM Operational Working Group.

7. A meeting of the HCA Hydrographic Priorities Working Group (HPWG), in charge of coordinating hydrographic surveying and nautical charting (INT charts and ENC’s), took place during HCA-13. As a consequence, revised schemes for small and medium scale ENC’s (usage bands 1, 2 and 3) were agreed, as well as new schemes for large scale ENC’s (usage bands 4 and 5). Also, the inclusion of six new INT charts in the scheme, in the Antarctic Peninsula and in the area of Larsemann Hills, was agreed. As of December 2013, 71 INT charts had been published, out of 111 charts in the scheme, and 87 ENC’s out of the some 150 ENC’s that are expected eventually.

8. An on-line Antarctic GIS (<http://hca.iho.int/>), developed by the IHO Secretariat in Monaco, was demonstrated. It enables selected layers of hydrographic-related information to be displayed on top of an Antarctic coastline and bathymetry background. The underlying database currently comprises metadata on hydrographic surveys, INT charts, ENC’s, Maritime Shipping Routes (MSR), tide records, scientific stations, and undersea feature names. The system allows layers to be selected as needed and provides functions such as zooming in and out, and displaying the attributes associated with a feature (for example, the INT number, title, limits and producer of a given INT chart). A typical utilization of the GIS could be, as part of a chart production plan exercise, to examine the area delimited by a planned INT chart and see where surveys have already been conducted, by whom and when. This should be helpful in any decision-making regarding the need for future surveys in the area concerned. The next steps will be to update the survey metadata contained in the GIS database and add a new layer on surveys planned in Antarctica in the next two years or so by HCA Member States.

9. The actions agreed at HCA-13 are listed in Annex A together with their current status.

10. The 14th HCA Conference has tentatively been scheduled for March or April 2015 in Ecuador.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Robert WARD
President

ACTIONS RESULTING FROM THE 13th HCA CONFERENCE AND STATUS

Agenda Item	Action	Details	Status (March 2014)
5.	HCA13/01	IHB to post the Ships of Opportunity Guidelines (Doc. HCA13-05B), on the HCA page of the IHO website as an HCA reference document.	Done. See HCA page > Misc. > HPWG.
5.	HCA13/02	HCA Chair to present the Ships of Opportunity Guidelines (Doc. HCA13-05B) to the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC), for its consideration at ARHC-4 in January 2014.	Done. Liaison Note from HCA to ARHC, dated 11 March 2014.
5.	HCA13/03	HPWG to analyse existing ENC coverage and to respond to WEND-WG letter dated 18 September 2012 (HCA12-07.2B) concerning overlaps, gaps and large scale (major port/points of entry) coverage. (carried over from HCA12)	In progress
5.	HCA13/04	HCA Members to send a selection of print-quality images to the IHB for PR purposes.	No pictures received to date
5.	HCA13/05	IHB to request HCA Members to provide details of their planned surveys for the 2014-15 season to the HPWG Chair as soon as possible; required parameters to be based on those indicated in Australian Hydroscheme format.	In progress
5.	HCA13/06	IHB to provide access to the information on HCA Members' planned surveys for the 2014-15 season to IAATO and other relevant entities.	To follow Action HCA13/05
6.1	HCA13/07	Argentina to pay an informal visit to the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat (ATS) in Buenos Aires, to foster a continuing relationship between ATS and HCA so as to raise awareness of hydrography and charting issues and thereby improve support from ATCM	Not known
6.1	HCA13/08	Chair to write to ATS seeking guidance on the validity of ATCM Recommendation XV-19/1989 and to confirm that it only requires ratification by the Republic of Korea in order to enter into effect. [<i>Post-meeting note: Recommendation XV-19/1989 is likely to be superseded upon agreement by ATCM-37 of the consolidated list of Recommendations on Operational Matters submitted by COMNAP to ATCM-36. HCA contributed to this submission.</i>]	Done. No response received to date. However, see post-meeting note.
6.1	HCA13/09	Chair to include a proposal in the IHO report to ATCM-37 that the ATCM Operational WG considers the future development of appropriate guidelines concerning the contribution that vessels and craft that operate in poorly surveyed or charted waters in Antarctica can make to improve the fundamental hydrographic dataset.	Done
6.1	HCA13/10	HCA Member States to brief their ATCM delegates on the IHO report and any other IHO submissions to ATCM-37.	In progress
6.4	HCA13/11	IHB to contact SCAR to check whether they are willing to continue cooperating with HCA as an observer organization.	Done. IHB Letter to SCAR, dated 11 March 2014.
HPWG	HCA13/12	IHB to include in S-11 a new INT chart covering the area of Larsemann Hills, with following details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scale: 1:50 000 at 68°S - Limits: 69°29.00'S to 69°04.10'S - 76°34.00'E to 75°48.09'E - Producer: Australia 	Done

Agenda Item	Action	Details	Status (March 2014)
	HCA13/13	IHB to amend in S-11 the limits of chart INT 9128 (scale 1:5 000; producer: Spain) to 62°40.27'S - 62°37.46'S and 060°26.00'W - 060°20.98'W. IHB to also correct the depiction of INT 9121 (scale 1:40 000; producer: Spain) in S-11.	Done
HPWG	HCA13/14	HPWG Chair to provide the IHB with details of the new INT chart of Lemaire Channel (scale 1:35 000; producer: UK), i.e. INT number, title, limits, scale latitude and format. IHB to then include the new INT chart in S-11.	Done
HPWG	HCA13/15	HPWG Chair to provide the IHB with details of the new INT chart amalgamating the existing INT 9117, INT 9118 and INT 9119 into one single A0 chart with number INT 9117 and UK as producer. IHB to then amend S-11 accordingly.	Done
HPWG	HCA13/16	HPWG Chair to provide the IHB with details of the three new INT charts, to be derived from ES 7002 (scale 1:10 000; producer: Spain), CL 15351 (scale 1:30 000; producer: Chile) and CL 15352 (scale 1:7 000; producer: Chile), i.e. INT number, title, limits, scale latitude and format. IHB to then include the three new INT charts in S-11.	Done
HPWG	HCA13/17	HPWG Chair to include Cierva Cove and Orne Harbour in the Long Term Survey Plan and the Survey Short List, including the MSR graphic. IHB to then post the revised documents on the IHO website.	In progress
HPWG	HCA13/18	HPWG Chair to check with Greece if they wish to continue participating in HPWG.	Not known
8.2	HCA13/19	HCA Members to check and update the information contained in doc. HCA13-08.2B that will be circulated with the draft minutes of HCA-13 and to amend where needed.	Done. Rev1 of HCA13-08.2B posted on the IHO website.
8.5.2	HCA13/20	IHB to include in the HCA Antarctic GIS Database additional layers of information on planned surveys and geographic names on land.	In progress
8.5.2	HCA13/21	IHB to seek, via an HCA Letter, information from HCA Members and Observers on past surveys conducted in Antarctic waters, for inclusion in the HCA Antarctic GIS Database.	In progress
8.5.2	HCA13/22	HCA Members to consult the HCA Antarctic GIS at http://hca.iho.int/ and provide their comments to the IHB.	No comments received to date.
8.5.3	HCA13/23	HCA Chair to report on the HCA progress and perspective on MSDI issues, as part of the IHO report to ATCM-37.	Done
9.	HCA13/24	IHB to amend articles 1.2 and 3.6 of the HCA Statutes, as agreed at HCA-13, and post the revised Statutes on the IHO website.	Done. Revised HCA Statutes posted on the IHO website.