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**CIRCULAR LETTER 53/2014
22 July 2014**

**IHO CONTRIBUTION TO THE PREPARATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS POST-2015
FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

Reference: IHO Resolution 1/2005 as amended - IHO Response to Disasters

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The reduction of vulnerabilities and risks to hazards has been an explicit item on the agenda of the international community for almost a quarter of a century. At the initiative of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), an International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was launched on 1 January 1990. The 1st World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction met in Yokohama, Japan, in 1994 and adopted the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation. In 2005, the 2nd World Conference on Disaster Reduction met in Kobe, Japan, and adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA): Building the Resilience of Countries and Communities to Disasters.

2. The UN General Assembly, in its Resolution 66/199 of 22 December 2011, initiated, via the UN Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. The Assembly decided, through its Resolution 67/209 of 21 December 2012, to convene the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 to review the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and to adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. By Resolution 68/211 of 20 December 2013, the Assembly decided to hold the Conference in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015, at the invitation of the Government of Japan, and established “the Open-ended Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third World Conference to review the organizational and substantive preparations for the Conference, approve the programme of work of the Conference and propose rules of procedure for adoption by the Conference”.

3. The Assembly further decided that the Preparatory Committee would meet in Geneva, Switzerland, in July and November 2014, for two days each time. In view of the recognition by the Assembly of the importance of the contributions and participation of all relevant stakeholders, including intergovernmental organizations, and the opportunity to highlight the role and importance of surveying and charting the world oceans, seas and coastal waters in the prevention and mitigation of maritime disasters, and in line with the theme of this year’s World Hydrography Day “Hydrography - much more than just nautical charts”, the Directing Committee registered the IHO as a contributor to the preparatory process as an intergovernmental organization that has a standing invitation to participate as an Observer in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

4. Director Gilles Bessero represented the IHO at the 1st session of the Preparatory Committee which was hosted by the UN Office in Geneva on 14 and 15 July 2014. The session attracted more than 600 registered participants representing over 130 UN Member States, 20 intergovernmental organizations, UN programmes, funds and agencies, and the civil society. Besides organizing the procedures and work of the Committee, most of the session was devoted to hearing statements, without debate, giving the views of the delegations on the development of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2).

5. In his statement on behalf of the IHO, Director Bessero recalled that the reduction of risks related to marine disasters is a major component of disaster risk reduction and highlighted the fundamental role of hydrography in predicting the impact of marine disasters and supporting early warning systems, as reflected in the introduction of IHO Resolution 1/2005 as amended. Director Bessero noted the decreasing level of government sponsored surveying activities and advised that the very significant lack of reliable, high resolution bathymetric data for many parts of the world's coastal waters should be a cause of particular concern and should be taken into account in the international strategy for disaster reduction. The importance of Earth observations as an enabling component of disaster risk reduction was underlined in the statement of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), but very few other delegations referred to the need to collect and make available the appropriate geospatial data to support informed decisions on disaster risk reduction.

6. The final report of the session will be posted on the web site of the 3rd World Conference at www.wcdr.org/preparatory/prepcom1 when available.

7. Based on the information provided to the session, the drafting of HFA2 should be conducted in accordance with the timeline provided in Annex A.

8. The Directing Committee will continue advising that the negotiations of HFA2 should address the availability of appropriate coastal and bathymetric data, both through direct contribution to the consultation process and through related initiatives and programmes, such as the UN initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management and the GEO work plan.

9. Considering that the negotiation process is driven and controlled by Member Governments, it is essential that the initial input from the Directing Committee be taken forward at the national and regional levels. Therefore, the Directing Committee urges IHO Member States to liaise with and brief their national delegations to the Preparatory Committee. The Directing Committee also invites the Chairs of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions to consider providing input through the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction which are listed in Annex B.

10. The Directing Committee welcomes Member States' comments and feedback on this subject.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Gilles BESSERO
Director

Annex A: Timeline for drafting the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction

Annex B: List of regional platforms for disaster risk reduction

Timeline for drafting the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction

Timing	Action and Deliverable	Comment
14-15 July 2014	1 st session of the Preparatory Committee (PC(I)): Member States and other stakeholders express views and proposals for the content of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.	Participation of the IHB. Delivery of a statement on behalf of the IHO.
8 August 2014	English-language version of co-Chairs ¹ pre-zero draft posted on the World Conference website. At the same time, draft is submitted for translation in all United Nations languages (available by first week of September).	
September until early October 2014	Informal consultative meetings held.	Participation of the IHB and IHO Member States as appropriate.
Mid-October 2014	English-language version of the co-Chairs' zero draft posted on the World Conference website. At the same time, the zero draft is submitted for translation in all United Nations languages.	
17-18 November 2014	2 nd session of the Preparatory Committee (PC(II)): Member States negotiate the zero draft, in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 68/211, and decide upon future negotiating modalities as appropriate, taking into account the contribution of stakeholders.	No participation of the IHB (conflict with other IHO activities).
...	...	Subject to the outcome of PC(II)
14-18 March 2015	3 rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction: Member States adopt the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.	IHO possibly represented by the Host Country (Japan).

Source: Document of the UN General Assembly A/CONF.224/PC(I)/INF.4

¹ The co-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee are Ms. Päivi Kairamo and Mr. Thani Thongphakdi, respectively Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand, to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

List of regional platforms for disaster risk reduction

Regional Platform	Countries involved	Regional Hydrographic Commissions potentially concerned
Regional Consultations for Central Asia and South Caucasus	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan	MBSHC
Africa Regional Platform	Member States of the African Union	EAtHC, MBSHC, NIOHC and SAIHC
Regional Platform of the Americas	Countries of North, South and Central America and the Caribbean	MACHC, SEPRHC, SWAtHC, USCHC
Pacific Platform	Pacific Island Countries and Territories	EAHC, SWPHC
Asian Conference	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Dem People's Rep of, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Fed States of, Nauru, Nepal, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Viet Nam	EAHC, NIOHC, SWPHC
Arab Conference	Member States of the Arab League	EAtHC, MBSHC, NIOHC, RSAHC
European Forum	Member States of the Council of Europe	BSHC, EAtHC, MBSHC, NHC, NSHC
ASEAN Committee	Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam	EAHC, NIOHC

Source: www.wcdr.org/preparatory/regional