



IHB File No. S1/0100

CIRCULAR LETTER 01/2015
6 January 2015

**STATUS REPORT ON APPROVALS OF AMENDMENTS TO
THE CONVENTION ON THE IHO
AND OF APPLICATIONS FROM NEW MEMBER STATES**

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The Directing Committee and staff of the IHB are pleased to take advantage of this first Circular Letter of the year to renew their very best wishes for 2015 to all the IHO Member States and are looking forward to another busy and fruitful year for the International Hydrographic Organization. Below we provide an update on the status of the approvals of the Protocol of Amendments to the IHO Convention as well as of the pending applications from new Member States to the Organization.

Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO

2. In order for the proposed amendments to the Convention on the IHO to enter into force, the approval of at least 48 existing Member States, being two-thirds of the Member States entitled to vote at the time of the 3rd Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC-3) held in 2005, are required.

3. According to the information provided by the Department of External Relations and Cooperation of the Government of Monaco at the end of 2014, 41 of the required 48 Member State Governments (Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States of America) have formally notified their approval of the Protocol of Amendments. Two approvals (China and Russian Federation) were recorded in 2014.

4. Since the EIHC-3, the IHO and the Directing Committee have been progressively adapting the administrative and the organizational arrangements of the IHO to conform to the structure envisaged under an amended Convention. This includes a three-part Work Programme, a strategic planning process, and programme performance monitoring. However, until such time as the proposed Amendments to the Convention are approved, the full effect of the revised arrangements cannot be achieved. These include simplified and more encouraging procedures for the admission of new Member States, improved governance of the Organization through the establishment of a Council and more frequent Conferences (Assemblies) where the important strategic issues affecting the IHO can be regularly reviewed and addressed. A brief in English, French and Spanish outlining the principal effects of the Amendments is available on the IHO website at www.iho.int > Home > IHO Membership > Protocol of Amendments.

5. The 5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference agreed in Conference Decision No. 2 that “ ... those Member States that have not yet ratified the Protocol of Amendments to the IHO Convention should do so as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the recruitment of new Member States”. The objective to record an additional seven approvals in time to hold the first Assembly in 2017 seems within reach. The Directing Committee intends to take all necessary measures, in liaison with the Government of Monaco and with the relevant Member States, to achieve this goal, building on the initiatives undertaken since September 2012. In all cases, the Directing Committee remains available to brief relevant government or diplomatic staff, particularly those based in diplomatic missions in Europe.

Pending Applications / Accession of New Member States

6. The States listed below, whose membership applications were approved in earlier years, have not yet deposited their Instrument of Accession to the IHO Convention:

Mauritania (application approved in April 1991)

Bulgaria (application approved in April 1992)

Sierra Leone (application approved in September 2010)

Haiti (application approved in November 2012)

The Directing Committee has continued to be in communication with the authorities of these States to encourage them to complete this final formality.

7. The Directing Committee was particularly pleased that the pending applications for IHO membership from Brunei Darussalam (53 approvals), Georgia (53 approvals) and Viet Nam (56 approvals) all obtained the required two-thirds approval of the IHO Member States in November-December 2014. These countries have now been contacted by the Government of Monaco to formally inform them of their approval status and to ask them to proceed with the deposit of their Instrument of Accession. The Directing Committee has also written to the three countries and is looking forward to welcoming these countries as full IHO Member States in the near future.

Conclusion

8. The Directing Committee encourages those representatives of Member States that have not yet indicated to the Government of Monaco their position on the approval of the Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO to actively follow up this matter with their government authorities, identifying any problems that may be present and, if needed, seek the assistance of the Directing Committee.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Robert WARD
President

Copy to:

- Pending Member States whose application for membership has been approved: Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Georgia, Haiti, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Viet Nam.
- Department of External Relations and Cooperation of the Government of Monaco.