

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FROM SIXTH ABLOS CONFERENCE – 25-27 OCTOBER 2010, MONACO

Sunil Bisnath, August 2011

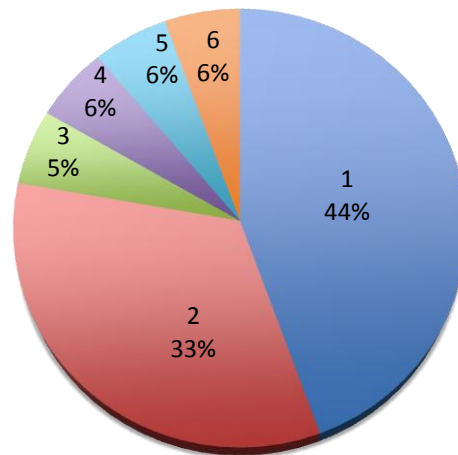
### PART 1: SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

#### Overview:

- 36 questionnaires completed and returned
- Amazing how many people misread questions or place responses in wrong sections!
- Significant amount of information collected, indicating great value of questionnaire
- I've included discussion points based on my opinions
- Primary and secondary attendee comments determined by number of times a comment was made

#### Conference attendees:

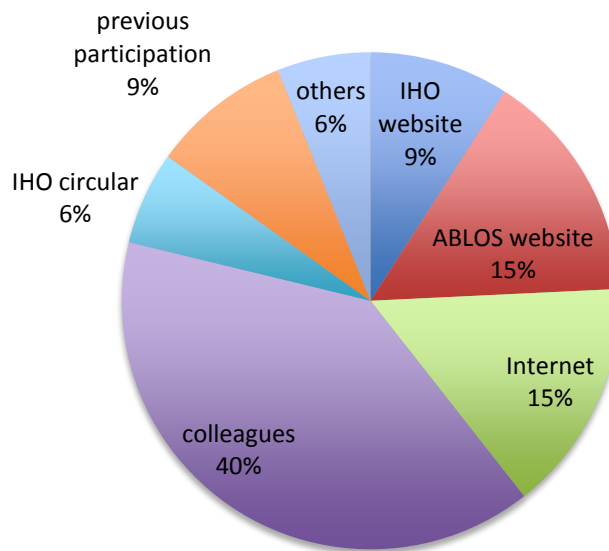
ABLOS conference attendance (# of years)



#### Discussion

- Is apparent recent popularity typical?
- If recent increase, is it due to organising, conference theme, etc.?
- Bringing in new blood, new states, etc.?

### How attendees learnt of conference



#### Discussion

- Most people heard of conference through colleagues (40%), websites (40%) and from previous participation (10%)

#### Positives of conference

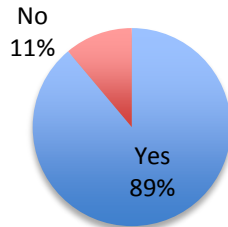
- Primary:
  - Diversity of topics; contemporary topics; timely
  - Quality of papers / expertise of speakers
  - Use of two projectors this year
  - Location
  - Sessions kept on schedule; organisation
- Secondary:
  - Larger audience
  - Multitude of viewpoints
  - Keynote speaker

#### Suggested improvements to be made

- Primary:
  - Provide speakers material in advance (at least abstracts; perhaps papers; e.g., on website; presentations at conference – we provided CDs)
  - Improve audio
  - Larger facilities (perhaps rotate conference amongst member states)
  - More relaxed schedule; perhaps more time for presentation depth and discussion
  - More time for networking (have two evening events)
  - Morning coffee

- Secondary:
  - Improve quality of presenters communication skills
  - Provide topic overviews to novice attendees
  - More analysis and less description

**Scope and depth of presentations**

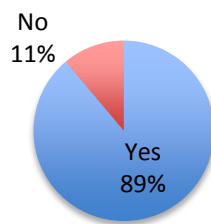


Primary concerns:

- Too many legal presentations, not enough technical ones
- Too many country-specific presentations without global application
- Need more presentation depth and time for analysis and discussion

**Conference arrangements**

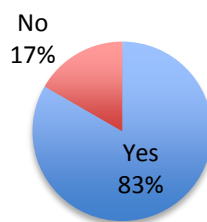
Was 2.5 duration adequate?



Comments:

- Make three full days (28 countries in attendance – long way to travel)
- Two days maximum
- Believe its optimum
- Chocked programme

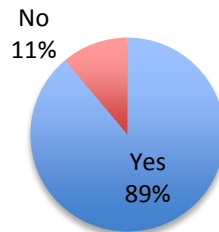
Were you kept adequately informed before the Conference?



Comments:

- Slow to receive registration confirmation
- Provide abstracts / papers / programme before conference
- Information and responses were fast and accurate

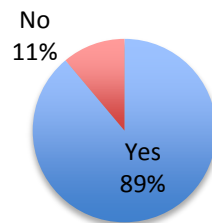
Were you kept adequately informed during the Conference?



Comments:

- *Steve Shipman did a wonderful job!*
- Provide abstracts / papers before conference

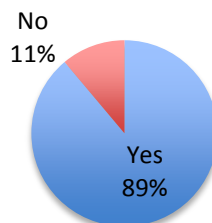
Were registration arrangements satisfactory?



Comments:

- Registration fully booked very early

Were facilities satisfactory?



Primary comments:

- Increase number of participants
- Larger venue; more toilets; better audio
- Organising committee provide abstracts / papers to participants at time of registration

### Suggestion for topics of next conference

- General comments:
  - Have IHB issue circular and request member states to submit topics for next conference
  - *Leave decision with experts: ABLOS members!*
- Legal topics:
  - Joint development and cooperative arrangements in areas without agreed maritime boundaries – joint EEZs Marine scientific research
  - De-commissioning of oil platforms; Pipelines transiting territorial waters of several coastal states; Manmade structures at sea or in coastal zones
  - Is UNCLOS keeping pace with expanding and evolving use of world's oceans
  - Vanishing islands; Low lying areas
  - Bio-prospecting “sea as laboratory” concept
  - Piracy
- Technical topics:
  - Normal baselines, straight baselines, static versus dynamic baselines
  - Effect of sea level in delimitations, baselines, etc.
  - Publication of maritime lists and boundaries in modern IT environment – are lists and charts enough or should data be web-enabled?
  - Technological change and implications for UNCLOS given it was framed on 60s / 70s technology; Use of AUVs and gliders for hydrographic surveys
- Geographically focussed sessions:
  - Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic coast
  - South China Sea; East China Sea
  - Arctic
  - Antarctic
- Review topics:
  - Address and elaborate on interpretation of “equitable solution”, special circumstances, historical title, etc.
  - Analyses of CLCS recommendations (are they in accordance with Art. 76?)
  - Overview of UNCLOS (legal and technical); IHB's historical role in facilitating understanding
  - Talks on Art. 76; Interpretation of UNCLOS in Art. 76: e.g., differences between submarine ridges, elevations and oceanic ridges; meaning of evidence to contrary
  - Practice of countries and problems encountered
  - Roles of specific features in delimitation work and practices on “maritime cadastres / registers”
- Others:
  - Some ‘outsider’ presentations from different specialist / technical / user perspectives
  - Relation of hydrography to other forms of research / survey include in UNCLOS
  - Data sources for ECS submissions and discussion of techniques to fill evidence gaps – cases studies from UNCLOS submissions

**Some general and interesting comments**

- General:
  - Very good conference. Thanks.
  - Attended primarily to network
  - Number and composition of audience was quite impressive and made for great interaction and networking
  - Show nationality and current country (registering) on delegates badges and lists
  - Initiative of ABLOS is laudable to bring better understanding of the difficult topics
  - Thank all staff at IHB for contributing to this conference
- Interesting:
  - Have an uncomfortable feeling that the ABLOS conference programme / format is becoming a bit tired and some re-invigoration is required – perhaps a close look at the purposes and objectives of the conference
  - Recommend the study of LOS as a compulsory subject for LLB in most universities
  - Participation by more advanced countries to share their experiences would be useful to many developing countries, who are trying to overcome some of the technical issues
  - Persons presenting personal views should not sign as officials
  - Efforts should be made to make conclusions applicable to member states

**Sunil's questions and comments for discussion**

- The feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive. But there is room for improvement.
- Can we make the conference larger? And at a larger facility?
- Can we add more networking / discussion opportunities? e.g., networking session each of two nights
- Vast majority of questionnaires were completed with many comments. Moving to a more quantitative assessment would most likely be detrimental to our knowledge gathering.
- Should we include general UNCLOS presentations or material for new participants?
- Have abstracts (even papers, presentations) available before conference (web, CD)?
- Review purposes and objectives of the conference?

**PART 2: RAW QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES**

1. Is this your first ABLOS Conference? If not, how many times have you attended?

YES = 16

NO = 20; 5,2,2,2,6,2,4,6,3,2,4,2,5,2,2,2,3,2,2

2. How did you learn about this year's Conference?

- IHO website x3
- IHO circular x2
- Previous participation x3
- Colleagues x13
- Internet x5
- ABLOS website x5
- International Boundaries Research Unit mailing list
- Invitation

3. What did you like about this year's Conference? (Be critical)

- Diverse topics (general overview of contentious issues; focus on interesting issues) x11
- Larger audience x2
- Concluded with ABLOS recommendations to DOALOS
- Learn differing opinions about contentious UNCLOS issues, especially baselines and Art. 76 x2
- Contemporary topics selected
- Multitude of points of view x2
- Quality of papers / expertise of speakers x7
- Organisation
- A/V (Use of two projectors this year) x4
- Technical aspects of maritime boundary delimitation
- Best year presentation layout
- Sessions kept to schedule and good chair control x2
- Baseline papers
- Some presentations too technical
- Most presentations related to legal matters
- Location x2
- Keynote speaker x2
- CD for papers
- WiFi use
- Interdisciplinary approached and private/public sphere convergence
- Venue
- More in depth studies
- Networking opportunities
- Too much focus on legal aspects

## 4. Where do you think improvements would be desirable? (Be honest)

- Provide speakers' material in advance, e.g., abstracts on website and / or papers / presentations x6
- Some presentations were unhelpful, e.g., exercise by Dorst was unreal – it could have been made more relevant
- Improved audio x2
- Given first time participants, over view of origins and provisions of UNCLOS / LOS would increase understanding and participation x2
- Transportation for participants
- Improve facilities, or consider possibility of having conference hosted by IHO / IAG member state x2
- Fixing of equitable boundary lines
- Have cocktail / get together sessions both nights (charge more for drinks) – as networking is considered of great importance to most x2
- Talk about boundary organisation structure help some countries in development of their own
- Water machines also in coffee break area
- Screens (lower portions) often obscured by heads
- Coffee before first morning session x2
- Relax schedule a bit: two rather than three talks per session / more time for discussion x3
- Group sessions by hydrography and law
- Consider a different presentation format, e.g., roundtable discussion, or just more discussion
- While not easy to achieve, would be good for each session to be themed with papers grouped accordingly
- In 2.5 days (9 sessions) three to four issues can be adequately examined
- Less papers by UK law firms
- Some presentations had poor delivery
- More analytical and less descriptive
- Be more critical towards presenters' language skills – difficult to follow such presentations
- Add space for more attendees
- Topics should be broader
- Room temperature warm
- Provide a summary of status of UN submissions at start of conference (e.g., as provided in Ron McNabb's presentation)
- Impressed by two new screens in conference room



5. Were you satisfied with the scope and depth of presentations? If not, why?

YES = 26

NO = 5

- Some presentations were focused on speakers' own country with little in the way of solutions for other countries
- For former colonies, perspective on associated boundary mutations could help minimise misunderstanding in handling current issues
- As ABLOS is a technical body, greater number of technical presentations than legal ones
- Review of ICJ decision in case between Nigeria and Cameroon over Bakassi Peninsula And Green Tree Agreement
- Wonder if more legal bias than 2008
- Few problems understanding foreign speakers
- 25 minutes rather than 20 minutes per speaker / too scanty x2
- Good range and depth, particularly from 'younger' speakers
- A few papers a bit unrealistic and lacking appreciation of real world
- More distinguished professors would add more depth, both in presentations and discussions
- More time for discussion
- Too many presentations with a reviewing character, and too few of an analytical character
- Presentations should have more depth and more specificity
- In depth study or consideration of some of the topics should be done
- Enjoyed all presentations

6. Please suggest topics that you'd like to see addressed at the next Conference.

- Normal baselines, straight baselines, static versus dynamic baselines x3
- Practice of countries and problems encountered
- Address and elaborate on interpretation of "equitable solution", special circumstances, historical title, etc. x3
- Interpretation of UNCLOS in Art. 76: e.g., differences between submarine ridges, elevations and oceanic ridges; meaning of evidence to contrary
- Have IHB issue circular and request member states to submit topics for next conference
- Overview of UNCLOS (legal and technical); IHB's historical role in facilitating understanding
- Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic coast
- Effect of sea level in delimitations, baselines, etc. x2
- Overview of work and practices on "maritime cadastres / registers"
- Publication of maritime lists and boundaries in modern IT environment – are lists and charts enough or should data be web-enabled?
- Marine scientific research
- Piracy
- De-commissioning of oil platforms
- Pipelines transiting territorial waters of several coastal states
- Is UNCLOS keeping pace with expanding and evolving use of world's oceans

- Joint development and cooperative arrangements in areas without agreed maritime boundaries – joint EEZs x2
- Geographically focussed sessions: South China Sea; East China Sea; Arctic; Antarctic
- Vanishing islands
- Low lying areas
- Relation of hydrography to other forms of research / survey include in UNCLOS
- Analyses of CLCS recommendations (are they in accordance with Art. 76?) x2
- Roles of specific features in delimitation
- Arctic Ocean surveying and charting
- Use of AUVs and gliders for hydrographic surveys
- Manmade structures at sea or in coastal zones
- Bio-prospecting “sea as laboratory” concept
- Talks on Art. 76
- Technological change and implications for UNCLOS given it was framed on 60s / 70s technology
- Some ‘outsider’ presentations from different specialist / technical / user perspectives
- Data sources for ECS submissions and discussion of techniques to fill evidence gaps – cases studies from UNCLOS submissions
- Leave decision with experts: ABLOS members

7. Conference arrangements (please circle Y or N, and amplify N answers):

(A) Was the duration (two and one-half days) OK?

YES = 29

NO = 7

- Make three full days (28 countries in attendance – long way to travel) x2
- Two days maximum x2
- Believe its optimum
- Chocked programme

(B) Were you kept adequately informed before the Conference?

YES = 30

NO = 6

- Slow to receive registration confirmation
- Provide abstracts / papers / programme before conference x4
- Information and responses were fast and accurate

(C) Were you kept adequately informed during the Conference?

YES = 35

NO = 1

- Steve Shipman did a wonderful job
- Provide abstracts / papers before conference

(D) Were registration arrangements satisfactory?

YES = 33

NO = 2

- Registration fully booked very early

(E) Were facilities satisfactory?

YES = 32

NO = 4

- Increase number of participants
- Organising committee provide abstracts / papers to participants at time of registration
- Display prominent banner in suitable part of harbour
- Not adequate number of toilets x2
- Lack of transportation to conference
- Allow more participants, as restricting participations restricts topics, views and discussion
- Audio issues x2
- An amphitheatre room might be more suitable
- Terrace should be used as break venue

6. General comments:

- Very good conference. Thanks. x2
- Attended primarily to network. Wider geographic representation would have been welcome, but know how difficult that is to achieve
- Some presentations were limited to the context of particular nations
- Have presentations / papers available on conference
- Conference on the whole as okay. Little improvement in area of transportation
- Conference is an important forum for technical and legal aspects of LOS and for this mission the coverage of these issues, in my opinion, must be balanced
- Recommend the study of LOS as a compulsory subject for LLB in most universities
- Well done (as usual)! x2
- Thanks x2
- Highlight speakers on programme for multi-author papers
- Show nationality and current country (registering) on delegates badges and lists
- Number of composition of audience was quite impressive and made for great interaction and networking
- Good conference. Keep striving to attract young academics and practitioners
- Have an uncomfortable feeling that the ABLOS conference programme / format is becoming a bit tired and some re-invigoration is required – perhaps a close look at the purposes and objectives of the conference
- Enjoyed the interesting presentations
- Appreciation to organising committee – great job
- Thank you for opportunity to join with conference
- Hopefully, ABLOS will find solutions to conference technical issues (A/V?) x2
- Initiative of ABLOS is laudable to bring better understanding of the difficult topics

- Perhaps conference venue can be rotated between various member states
- Participation by more advanced countries to share their experiences would be useful to many developing countries, who are trying to overcome some of the technical issues
- Persons presenting personal views should not sign as officials
- Well organised x3
- Conclusions on knotty issues should be published and sent to relevant international bodies
- Efforts should be made to make conclusions applicable to member states
- Enjoyed opportunity to interact with like-minded people
- Thank all staff at IHB for contributing to this conference