

11TH SESSION OF IMO'S SUB-COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE (COMSAR 11)

1 COMSAR 11 was held at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London from 19 – 23 February 2007 as the IMO HQ is undergoing refurbishment. Admiral Maratos (President), Steve Shipman, (PAH) and Peter Doherty (Chairman of CPRNW) represented the IHO. The following NAVAREA Coordinators were present: NAVAREA 1 (UK); NAVAREA II (France); NAVAREA III (Spain) and NAVAREAs IV and XII (USA) as well as the National Co-ordinator from Greece. The full report of the COMSAR Sub-Committee to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) is available from the IHO web site under "International Organizations – IMO", as soon as it is available.

2 Under Agenda Item 3, Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), COMSAR considered, amongst others, the following papers:

a) COMSAR 11/3 submitted by the IHO and reporting on the outcome of the CPRNW8 meeting held in September 2006. COMSAR noted the report and agreed to the issue of a COMSAR Circular regarding the incorrect use of C codes as drafted by CPRNW.

b) COMSAR 11/3/2 from the joint IMO/IHO/WMO CG and 11/3/4 from Norway regarding the establishment of new NAVAREAS in Arctic waters. COMSAR agreed that the five new NAVAREAS should be established and should extend to 90°N, that they should operate on a 24/7 basis and that Canada should be the Co-ordinator for NAVAREAs XVII and XVIII, Norway for NAVAREA XIX and the Russian Federation for NAVAREAs XX and XXI. The detailed descriptions of the boundaries between the new NAVAREAs were also agreed. COMSAR invited the IHO CPRNW to review and update the WNWNS guidance documentation as necessary. The IMO/IHO/WMO CG was re-established with revised ToR to consider and provide comments as follows:

- i) Who will act as METAREA issuing service?
- ii) How will warnings be transmitted, and can they be monitored as required? Systems other than Inmarsat (such as HF NBDP, NAVTEX and other satellite service providers) need to be considered;
- iii) How will the Inmarsat system definition manual and existing SafetyNET terminals be updated to allow receipt of MSI within the new NAVAREAs?
- iv) Required training, assistance, and support from IHO/CPRNW to support new NAVAREA co-ordinators and/or from JCOMM/ETMSS for METAREA issuing services; and
- v) Submit its report for COMSAR 12.

Existing members of the CG will be consulted on future deliberations. Others interested in joining the CG should contact the Chairman, Peter Doherty, by email at Peter.M.Doherty@nga.mil with a copy to sshipman@ihb.mc.

Venezuela made a verbal proposal suggesting that the limits of NAVAREAs IV and XII might be modified. COMSAR could not consider this as there was no written submission and invited Member Governments and international organizations to submit suitable proposals to the next session of the IHO CPRNW.

c) COMSAR 11/3/3 submitted by the IHO regarding the issue of a revised COMSAR Circular providing an updated list of NAVAREA co-ordinators. Two further amendments were reported during COMSAR and a COMSAR Circular was approved. S-53 Appendix 1 will be amended accordingly.

d) COMSAR 11/3/5 submitted by the Chairman of the NAVTEX Co-ordinating Panel reporting on NAXTEX matters arising since COMSAR 10.

3. As directed by MSC 82, COMSAR reviewed the text of the draft revised Resolution A.888(21) "Criteria for the Provision of Mobile Satellite Communication Systems in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)" in view of the decisions taken at MSC 82. COMSAR 11 also drafted consequential amendments to SOLAS Chapter IV.
4. COMSAR 11 considered the report of the Correspondence Group (CG) on E-Navigation established by the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV) and decided that:
 - i) NAV should decide on the User Requirements before COMSAR considers technical improvements to the GMDSS equipment if this is to be used.
 - ii) There should be a standardization of Performance Standards including a standard mode of operation for shipboard equipment, and the software installed in operating systems should follow a formal change control process.
 - iii) Matters relating to: Search and Rescue; data communication links; and operation of the GMDSS were within the remit of COMSAR.
 - iv) Existing GMDSS infrastructure could support SAR services and communications; however, with respect to E-Navigation, broadband communication on a global basis using satellite technology would be necessary.
5. COMSAR 12 is provisionally planned to be held in London from 7 – 11 April 2008.