

FIRST MEETING OF THE IHO INTER REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC1
Auditorium Rainier III, Monaco, 05 June 2009

The South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC)
Chairman's Report

Proposals: see section 7.

1. Background

The South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission met for the first time in 1993 (?) and, from that year nine conferences occurred.

SWPHC has eight full Members (Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, United Kingdom and United States of America), Observers from Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu or regional organizations such as PacMA, SOPAC, SPC (see section 5) and representatives from industry have participated in the Conferences.

The 9th Conference of the South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC) took place in Port Moresby, from 9 to 11 March 2009, under the Chairmanship of Ingénieur général Gilles Bessero (France). The meeting was organized and hosted by the National Maritime Safety Agency (NMSA) of Papua New Guinea. Seven Member States, out of eight, were represented at this meeting, plus observers from Cook Islands, Kiribati and Solomon and survey companies. In total, 17 delegates were in attendance. The first day was dedicated to a technical workshop whose objective was to raise the importance of hydrography in the South West Pacific region.

Due to the complexity of hydrography and the importance of the maritime stakes in the region, SWPHC activities need to be prioritized. This has to be done pragmatically according to three main objectives:

- assessment and clear understanding of the situation in this area in terms of hydrographic services to be provided in compliance with SOLAS, Chap V, Reg. 9 against maritime requirements;
- development of hydrographic capabilities in the island States;
- implementation of an adequate ENC coverage.

2. Assessment of hydrographic services against maritime requirements

A seminar on raising awareness of the importance of hydrography in South Pacific Island States was conducted in Fiji between 20 and 23 October 2008. This seminar was supported by IMO, as part of the IMO technical cooperation programme in the South Pacific, by IHO and by France. It was conducted by a Director of the IHB assisted by two experts from France and Chile. The attendees from 11 Pacific Island States (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federal States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu) represented various levels of maritime or related administrations.

A one-day technical workshop with similar aims was organized in conjunction with the 9th SWPHC Conference in March 2009.

3. Capacity Building

Capacity building has been identified as one major issue in the SWPHC Region. Three types of activities are related to that issue:

- liaison with regional organizations and national authorities to raise awareness of the importance of hydrographic services and support the development of hydrographic capabilities;
- assessment studies and technical visits to, identify, develop and monitor assistance projects;
- participation in the IHO Capacity Building Sub-Committee to provide input from the Region to the Capacity Building Work Programme (CBWP).

After the two meetings mentioned in section 2, Pacific Island Countries are now well aware of their obligations under SOLAS Regulations. One of the roles of the IHO is to help developing islands States to establish their own capability to provide at least updated hydrographic information to a charting authority in order to meet their SOLAS obligations and therefore fulfil their State responsibilities. The next step is to obtain government commitment to push that message forward in order to get the visibility and the recognition needed to take on and exercise full hydrographic responsibilities.

The Commission confirmed its approval of procedures 1 and 2 for submitting request of support to the CBSC. Various Capacity Building requirements were identified during the last conference. Inputs from Pacific islands countries are few and requests are essentially related to phases 1 and 2 of the Capacity Building process (awareness - education campaign and collection - circulation of information to maintain existing charts and publications). These countries are faced with a lack of human resources. The following requests for SWPHC CBSC Funds were formulated. They are listed below in order of priority agreed by the Commission.

1. Attendance at the PacMA meeting in Tonga in May 2009
2. Organization of a technical visit in Solomon in 2009
3. Organization of a technical visit in Cook Islands in 2009
4. Organization of a technical visit in Kiribati in 2009
5. Organization by Australia of a MSI workshop in 2009-10
6. Organization of a cartographic training course (category B) in 2010-11 (Fiji)

The corresponding CBSC requests (according to procedure 1) were forwarded to the CBSC Chairman in early April for submission to CBSC7 (Seoul, May 2009).

The Capacity Building Work Programme for 2009 was reviewed during the last Conference. Capacity Building Funds allocated to SWPHC for 2009 amounted to 25.000 euros and the expenditures to sponsor the attendance to the last SWPHC Conference amounted to 8,000 euros. The remaining amount should be sufficient to cover CBSC applications 1 to 4. CBSC request 5 (MSI workshop) will need to be shifted to 2010. In consequence, applications 5 and 6 will be proposed as input for the construction of the CB Work Programme for 2010-2011 during CBSC7.

At the last Conference Australia was confirmed as the regional Capacity Building coordinator.

4. Implementation of an adequate ENC coverage

The current status of ENC coverage is in line with meeting the objectives fixed for 2010. Nearly 100% coverage has already been reached for small scale ENC, 70% for medium scale

and 65% for large scale. Further developments related to coverage, consistency, quality, updating and distribution of ENC will be conducted in accordance with WEND guidelines.

Concerning usage band 1, overlaps exist between Japan and Korean ENC and Australian ones. An appropriate forum is needed within IHO to address the issue of overlap between different Regional Hydrographic Commissions.

ENC coverage for usage bands 2 to 6 within the SWPHC Region and the way to complete the ENC coverage at larger scales were discussed during the last Conference. It was suggested that initially priority should be given to producing coverage of the most important ports.

5. Liaison with regional organization and national authorities

Contacts with the regional organizations - Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) are sporadic with almost no feedback from SWPHC correspondences up to the last Conference. No SWPHC representative could attend the 37th annual session of SOPAC in Tuvalu (21- 30 October 2008) because it conflicted with the IMO-IHO seminar in Fiji. The SPC secretariat informed PNG that neither SPC Regional Maritime Programme (RMP) nor PacMA Executive Committee could be represented at the 9th SWPHC Conference. On a more positive side, it is worth noting that *south-pacific.travel* (formerly the South Pacific Tourism Organisation - SPTO) has put together a « South Pacific Cruise Ship Strategy » which identifies four « beacons ». Beacon II focuses on improving navigational charts, having accurate hydrographic charts and investing in landing infrastructure. Moreover, after an invitation sent by the PacMA Executive Committee, a SWPHC representative (New Zealand) attended as an observer the 13th meeting of PacMA (Tonga, 11 May 2009). On this occasion, a paper was submitted which developed the benefits of membership for SWPHC. The application of SWPHC for PacMA membership is still pending; a final decision is expected to be made by PacMA at the closed session of the 13th meeting.

6. Miscellaneous

Members are regularly invited to provide Australia (the SWPHC INT chart scheme coordinator) with updates on IHO M-11 publication and IHB with the IHO S-55 publication updates.

7. Proposals to the 1st IRCC

SWPHC proposes the IRCC:

- to promote and assist in the development of national hydrographic committees;
- to investigate the best way to address INT charts and ENC overlaps between neighbouring Regional Hydrographic Commissions;
- to promote and assist in the development of partnerships with regional maritime related fora and organizations.