

**2<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE**

**Report by**

**UNITED STATES of AMERICA**

**On**

**VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSIONS  
AS A PART OF IHO**

**1. Background.**

At the 2007 XVIth International Hydrographic Conference, the United States raised an issue as to whether the Regional Hydrographic Commissions were a part of the IHO. The response at that Conference was that the RHCs, were independent of the IHO (Proceedings of the XVIth I.H. Conference, Volume 1, discussion of Proposal 3 on pages 131 and 133, attached).

For the 2009 4<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary I.H. Conference, the United States submitted Proposal 15 for the RHCs to be made a part of the IHO, presenting the arguments in favor and risks of their not being a part of IHO (Proceedings of 4<sup>th</sup> E.I.H. Conference, Volume 1, pages 74-76 and withdrawal discussion, page 114, attached). At the Conference, the U.S. withdrew this Proposal, because the U.S. agreed with the comments from the United Kingdom that the IHO had no authority to impose inclusion of the RHCs which are independent organizations. That is, the U.S. agreed that RHCs must voluntarily agree to associate with IHO if they are to be a part of the Organization.

As a follow-up action, the U.S. volunteered to produce draft wording that might be used in RHC statutes for RHCs to become a part of the Organization. During IRCC1, this topic was discussed and the action was assigned to the USCHC to report to the IRCC2, IRCC1 Minutes of the First Meeting, Item 6,3 Proposals submitted by IRCC bodies, USCHC proposal and adopted decision, copy attached. The U.S. analyzed the IHO Technical Resolution T 1.3 as suggested by IRCC1, however, it was concluded that revision of the Resolutions would have no effect unless Regional Hydrographic Commissions had voluntarily associated with IHO. The U.S. developed the following proposal, which has not been endorsed by Canada and therefore is a Member State proposal rather than a USCHC proposal.

**2. Analysis.**

It is clear that for RHCs to voluntarily associate with the IHO that they must individually agree, and this must be a written agreement. In the time that has passed since the U.S. raised this issue, there have been views expressed that at least some of the RHCs already have agreed to be a part of the IHO through the wording in their Statutes. The U.S. has reviewed the Statutes of the

RHCs, copy attached. Thirteen of the RHCs have some language in their Statutes indicating that they consider themselves a part of the IHO and the remaining RHCs do not appear to do so.

### **3. Proposal.**

The U.S. proposes to the IRCC2 that a letter be written from the I.H. Bureau to the Chairman of all of the RHC's requesting that:

- a. The RHC confirm with their membership whether they consider the wording in their respective Statutes' to mean they are voluntarily associated with the IHO?
- b. If the RHC does not consider itself associated with the IHO, do they wish to remain an independent organization?
- c. Does the RHC wish to voluntarily associate itself with the IHO?

### **4. Additional Guidance.**

If the RHC wishes to voluntarily associate itself with the IHO, this could be accomplished by Letter of Agreement sent to IHO or by inclusion of revised text in the RHC Statutes. Such text might read, "The Commission, which is an integral part of the IHO and which promotes the aims of the Organization at the regional level, shall be known as the [name of Commission]."

Note: The status of the RHCs needs to be confirmed before the IHO Technical Resolution T 1.3 is redrafted. The U.S. has reviewed the pending Protocol of Amendments to the IHO Convention and finds NO reason for them to be further amended as a result of this proposal and the association of RHCs with the IHO.