

**SIXTH MEETING OF THE IHO INTER REGIONAL COORDINATION
COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC6
Paris, France, May 19-20, 2014**

**REPORT OF THE ARCTIC REGIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION
By Director Evert Flier (NO), Chair of ARHC**

1. **Chair:** Mr. Evert FLIER, Norway (from October 2012)
Mr. Sergey V. Travin, The Russian Federation (from 30 January 2014)

- Vice-Chair:** Capt. Alexander SHEMETOV, Russian Federation (from October 2012)
Ms. Kian Fadaie (acting National Hydrographer), Canada (from 30 January 2014)

2. **Membership:** Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russian Federation, USA
Observers: Iceland, Finland, The International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB)

3. **Meetings:** The ARHC has met once since the IRCC5. The 4th meeting was held in Portsmouth, NH, United States, 29-30 January 2014. A one day Scientific Forum was arranged 28 January at University of New Hampshire. The ARHC has planned a short meeting during the 5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC5) and the Fifth ARHC will be chaired and hosted by the Russian Federation tentatively during October 2015.

The ARHC runs several groups that work mainly by correspondence:

- The Strategic Planning Working Group. Chaired by Norway
- The Arctic International Charting Coordination Working Group. Chaired by Norway
- The Operational and Technical Working Group. Chaired by USA
- The Arctic Voyage Planning Guide Working Group was disbanded at ARHC4. A Drafting Group from Canada, Denmark and United States to continue the work to outline a minimum standard for an Arctic Voyage Planning Guide.

Detailed ARHC meeting reports are available on the IHB website.

4. **Agenda Items:**
Task numbers refer to IHO WP for 2013 (see CL 98/2012)
IHO Work Programme 1 – "Corporate Affairs"

Element 1.1 Co-operation with International Organizations and participation in relevant meetings.

ARHC: The ARHC Member States (MS) are involved in several of the organizations mentioned under 1.1.

Task 1.1.4 European Union

Denmark and Norway are closely involved with the efforts in the EU related to INSPIRE and also involved in a Working Group for closer cooperation with EU. The WG will be disbanded when the IHO-EU Network WG is established.

Tasks 1.1.12, 2-4 (IMO, committees of MSC, COMSAR and NAV)

A number of the ARHC HO representatives are involved in IMO meetings, mainly related to MSC with the sub-committees NAV and COMSAR. (Restructuring within IMO in 2013 has changed the naming and composition of Committees).

Task 1.1.20 Other Organizations

Since the autumn 2013 the ARHC has been in close contact with the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), a Working Group under the Arctic Council. The PAME has shown interest in the status of surveying and charting of the Arctic. The poor coverage in the Arctic has been described in a Note and in a letter to PAME. The ARHC is to deliver a more comprehensive status report on Arctic hydrography and charting before the PAME II meeting in September 2014.

IHO Work Programme 2 - "Hydrographic Services and Standards"

The Chair of ARHC participated in the HSSC5 Meeting.

Task 2.2 to 2.12 HSSC Working Groups Participation

The ARHC MSs are highly involved in the Working Groups under the umbrella of HSSC. Totally 3 Working Groups (DIP, MSDI, SC) are chaired by representatives from MSs within the Arctic geographical area. In addition MSs have 5 Vice-Chairs (TSMAD, DPS, SC, SNP, WENDWG).

IHO Work Programme 3 – " Inter Regional Coordination and Support"

Element 3.1 Co-operation with Member States and attendance at relevant meetings.

Task 3.1.1: Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission

The Commission has met twice since the XVIIIth IHC with inter-sessional work being done by correspondence. A short extraordinary ARHC meeting is planned for October 2014 during the EIHC5. The next ordinary meeting is likely to take place in Russia in October 2015.

All Members of ARHC are members in one or more of the other Regional Hydrographic Commissions.

Task 3.1.9: There are no unresolved matters with NSHC. All IHO documents related to the introduction of the new INT Chart Region N, which caused changes to Region D, are updated.

Task 3.1.18: Industry Participation in RHC meetings

The ARHC, as a Commission, engages with industry through its adoption of a Scientific

Forum, held the day in advance of the Commission meeting. This meeting has been established to permit several local agencies and academia dealing with Arctic issues to highlight their work on a regional or circumpolar basis as a means to inform the Member States of the variance of issues, requirements and science initiatives for the Arctic region as a whole. The ARHC leverages the Scientific Forum concept as a “best practices” opportunity for identifying partners and user requirements.

The ARHC continues its ongoing discussions internally on how to leverage hydrographic/bathymetric data obtained through non-conventional means. The remoteness and the extent of the Arctic is so demanding that traditional official hydrographic data collection strategies and coverage experienced in southern waters cannot reasonably be achieved in a timely manner for Arctic waters. As such, it is necessary to look for various collaboration or alternate technology opportunities for data gathering and data sharing activities. Liaison with marine science research institutes, Arctic tour operators, industry etc., has potential to be beneficial to ARHC MS’ to expand access to various forms of bathymetric data to assist in closing data gaps in the vast Arctic region.

Task 3.2.11 RHCs to encourage the approval of pending application for IHO membership

The Hydrographic Offices of ARHC Member States are cognizant of the attention to be given to new applications for IHO membership. Based on the results presented via IHO Circular Letter CL01-2014 this attention is evident but not yet to the level that all ARHC Members have responded to all applications.

Element 3.3 Capacity Building Management

Task 3.3.1: There are no capacity building initiatives currently carried out within the ARHC. However, it is worth noting that some ARHC HOs are involved in the IHO capacity building activities (Norway, United States). Norway currently represents the ARHC as CB Coordinator at the CBSC meetings. Norway participated in the CBSC11 in Wollongong (AU).

The ARHC CB coordinator has participated in the revision of the CB Strategy. The new version will be considered at the next IRCC meeting.

A draft for Terms of Reference (ToR) for the CB Coordinators has been prepared by a subgroup of the CBSC. The partly revised function of the CB Coordinators is expected to improve the connection to those RHCs who are not in need for CB support, but have expertise, running programs or have potential capacities that might be of interest for the capacity building in other regions.

Element 3.6 Coordination of Global Surveying and Charting

Task 3.6.1 C-55 Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide

ARHC Member States are cognizant of the requirements to maintain C-55 in its current form and are willing participants to the IHO efforts to seek means to make the C-55 status reporting more relevant to the requirements of the IHO.

Task 3.6.2 WENDWG

Some Member States of ARHC have been active in the work of the WENDWG. Canada holds the post as Vice-chair. Norway has participated in the work for preparing the proposal for RENC harmonization. During last ARHC meeting Member States were encouraged to

respond to CL06/14 related to revision of WEND guidelines and to consider the definition of Cartographic Boundaries for single ENC coverage (CL04/14).

Task 3.6.3: Maintain and coordinate ENC schemes, consistency and quality

The ARHC has established a Charting Coordination Working Group to deal with the coverage of paper charts and ENCs. The WG has not yet become fully operational as not all Members have nominated a candidate. Work is underway by individual Members and the ARHC collectively to eliminate overlaps and to assess priorities for the closing of gaps in ENC coverage in Region 'N'. Additionally, the close association of the Norwegian Hydrographic Service, as operator of PRIMAR, and the overall RENC efforts to ensure quality and consistency of global ENCs is to be noted.

Element 3.8 Ocean Mapping Programme

Task 3.8.3.2: promote data distribution through GEBCO participation in RHCs meetings

A contact to the organization operating IBCAO (The International Bathymetric Chart of the Arctic) is established. IBCAO was invited and represented at ARHC4. Norway has contributed with a considerable amount of multibeam data from the Barents Sea, as part of the Mareano programme, during the last few years.

5. ARHC initiatives of note:

- The IHB, following a recommendation from ARHC3, is investigating the possibility of IHO obtaining Observer status to the Arctic Council. An application was not considered at the 2013 Council and is postponed to 2015 Council.
- The ARHC is preparing a Strategic Directions document for the period 2014-2018.. The document will articulate the near-term key objectives and outcomes of the Commission.
- Satellite derived vertical reference surfaces for surveying is gaining attention. The Operations and Technology Working Group (OTWG) of ARHC has collected the experiences gained and suggested further activities.
- The ARHC has sought the expertise within TSMAD with respect to proper function of ECDIS north of 85°N. This item was addressed at IRCC5. A solution is suggested by TSMAD in cooperation with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)
- A specification of an Arctic Voyage Planning Guide, containing the minimum requirements, has been developed by a drafting team. Canada has publicly released an interactive web map solution of a Planning Guide for Canadian waters.
- A one-day Scientific Forum was arranged in connection with the latest ARHC4 meeting. The ARHC experience with a Scientific Forum, based on contributions from invited speakers from the scientific community, ship owners and other stakeholders, is quite positive and represent a “best practice” to be continued.