

7th Meeting of the IHO- Inter Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC-7)

Mexico City, Mexico, 1-3 June 2015

Report of the IHO Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA)

Submitted by:	Chair, HCA
Executive Summary:	This paper provides a summary report of the work and achievements of the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica since the last meeting of IRCC

1. Chair, Officers

Chair: Robert WARD, IHB, President of the Directing Committee, since Sept. 2012

Vice-Chair: John J. HAUMANN Jr., US, since October 2012

Secretary: Yves GUILLAM, IHB, since July 2014

- 2. Members States:** Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela, UK

Observers: Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM)
 International maritime Organization (IMO)
 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)
 Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programmes (COMNAP)
 International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO)
 International Association of Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA)
 The Scientific committee on Antarctic research (SCAR)
 General bathymetric Chart of the Ocean Project (GEBCO) - International
 Bathymetric Chart of the Southern Ocean (IBCSO)

3. Meetings

The following meetings related to HCA have taken place in the 2013-17 quinquennial period:

- HCA-13, 3 - 5 Dec. 2013, Cadiz, Spain
- ATCM-37, 28 April - 2 May 2014, Brasilia, Brazil (represented by HCA Chair)
- COMNAP AGM, 27 - 28 Aug. 2014, Christchurch, New Zealand (represented by HCA Chair)
- HCA-14, March-April 2016, Guayaquil, Ecuador - **POSTPONED**
- **Next Meeting**
- Next meeting: HCA-14, March/April 2016, date and venue not yet confirmed

4. HCA Working Groups

- Hydrography Priorities Working Group (HPWG), since Oct. 2012
- Chair: Andy WILLETT, UK

- Membership: Argentina, Australia, Chile, Germany, Greece, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, USA, COMNAP (observer) and IAATO (observer)

5. Status of IRCC Actions (relevant to HCA)

IRCC6/03	Participation of stakeholders at [HCA] conferences
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5.1 All ATCM Observer Organizations were invited to participate in HCA-14 to be held in Ecuador in April 2015 but no confirmations were received. Coupled with the potential non-attendance of some member States, the meeting was postponed until 2016.

5.2 IAATO was represented at EIHC-5.

6. HCA Cooperation with Other Organizations

6.1 HCA attempts to work closely with stakeholder organizations such as COMNAP, IAATO, SCAR, IMO and IOC. However, with the exception of successful work with IAATO, no co-operative programmes or packages using ships of opportunity or other resources have been achieved in order to improve survey data in critical shipping areas.

7. Achievements and Lessons Learned

7.1 The state of hydrographic surveying and nautical charting in Antarctica continues to pose serious risks for the safety of navigation as well as impeding the conduct of most activities taking place in the surrounding seas and oceans.

7.2 A number of IHO Member States, through their national Hydrographic Offices, are attempting to improve the situation. However, resources are limited and there does not appear to be much prospect of significant improvements in the near future unless new policy action is taken by governments together with ATCM and other Observer Organizations to HCA (SCAR, COMNAP, etcetera).

7.3 The fact that most Observer Organizations together with a number of IHO Member States that normally attend HCA meetings either did not reply or indicated that they would not participate in the HCA-14 meeting planned in 2015 is a matter of concern.

7.4 Due to the postponement of HCA-14 until 2016, the HCA Chair requested Members to provide relevant hydrographic plans, marine science campaigns/opportunities, charting programmes and any other matters of mutual interest to the IHB for subsequent circulation among the membership.

7.5 An annual report from the IHO on behalf of the HCA has been prepared by the IHB for tabling at the 38th session of the ATCM in Sofia, Bulgaria. The report repeats much of the content of previous reports. It highlights the concerns already reported to the ATCM that the lack of hydrographic knowledge in the region should be a serious matter of concern, yet the States Party to the Antarctic Treaty appear not to place any significant priority on improving hydrographic knowledge.

8. Actions required from IRCC7

IRCC is invited to:

- a. **Consider** the content of this report;
- b. **Take any actions** as considered appropriate.