

**15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission**  
**Lagos, Nigeria, 17-19 October**  
**and**  
**Regional Awareness Seminar on Maritime Geospatial Knowledge**  
**15-16 October**

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2018	
Task 3.2.1.4	Attendance of EAthC15 Conference
CBWP P-04	Regional Awareness Seminar on Maritime Geospatial Knowledge

The 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission (EAthC15) was held from 17 to 19 October 2018, in Lagos, Nigeria and hosted by the Nigerian Navy Hydrographic Office (NNHO). The Conference was chaired by Captain José Daniel GONZALEZ-ALLER LACALLE, National Hydrographer of Spain. Simultaneous interpretation French - English was provided.

The Conference was attended by 34 delegates. The six IHO Member States of the Region, six Associate Member States (out of nine) and seven Observer States (out of eleven) were represented. Representatives of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) and the Danish Maritime Administration (DMA) participated as observers. MOWCA and PMAWCA, which whom the IHO has Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), did not attend the meeting. Around 30 stakeholders from Nigeria also attended the meeting. Director Abri Kampfer and Assistant Director Alberto Costa Neves represented the IHO Secretariat.



Participants of EAthC15

The Chair reported on the main EAthC activities since the previous Conference held in 2016 and the list of actions arising from EAthC14 was updated. Director Kampfer provided an update on current IHO Secretariat matters, the outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the IHO Council and the activities of the IHO bodies that impact the region. The meeting also reviewed the Statutes in order to harmonize it with the entering into force of the amendments to the Convention on the IHO.

All the coastal States participating in the Conference reported on their activities, progress and difficulties. Despite the challenges, significant progress was made in coastal States in the region. Morocco had the Royal Navy Division of Hydrography, Oceanography and Cartography (DHOC) proclaimed by a Royal Dahir (a Moroccan King's decree) as the National Hydrographic Service. The DHOC was also appointed as the Secretariat of the recently created National Hydrographic Coordinating Committee (NHCC), a 5-year work plan was established, a new hydrographic survey vessel was built

and is in the process of delivery and nautical charts are being co-produced with France. Nigeria reported on the newly established Maritime Safety Information (MSI) portal and its broadcasting via NAVAREA II, the establishment of the basic hydrographic course, the construction of a new hydrographic vessel to be delivered in 2019 and the possibility of cooperation with other countries in the region.

Cameroun attended the meeting for the first time since 2012 and reported on the increase in awareness in the country and the plans to build capacity to comply with its international obligations. Senegal informed the meeting on the progress made with the program to monitor coastal erosion in (Senegal, Togo and Benin) and its relation with hydrography. Gambia reported that new hydrographic equipment was acquired and the process to identify the stakeholders for the National Hydrographic Coordinating Committee (NHCC) is underway. The meeting was informed that a hydrographic service is now operational in Guinea to ensure safety of navigation for ships accessing the Port of Conakry.

Liberia reported on the ongoing training of a MSI National Coordination and the intention for promulgation of MSI via SafetyNET, the national awareness on the international obligations and the need to create national legislation and operational services in the country and the plans to join the IHO. Côte d'Ivoire acquired a new survey launch equipped with multi-beam sonar, is in progress with its tidal program and improved its Capacity Building (CB) infrastructure at the *Académie régionale des sciences et techniques de la mer* (ARSTM). There is an intention to accede to the IHO Convention to become a Member State. France, Portugal, Spain and UK provided information on their developments and plans for the region, working in close cooperation with the African coastal states.

The conference was informed on the creation of a NHCC in Ghana, the existing National Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI), the creation of a MSI System and portal with the support of DMA, the progress made at the Regional Maritime University (RMU) and the plans to join the IHO. Togo informed the meeting on the establishment of a NHCC for the maritime affairs and the autonomous port of Lomé and the cooperation with the neighbour Benin. Gabon reported on the reframing of its maritime governance which includes hydrography and the closer cooperation with IHO, IALA and France.

Congo informed the meeting on the new projects to develop hydrographic port operations in Pointe-Noire. The Democratic Republic of Congo reported on the increased awareness on the importance of hydrography, maritime and the Congo River, where new projects funded by the World Bank and the European Union will improve hydrography, cartography and aids to navigation.

France, the CB Coordinator for the region, reported on the execution of the CB activities in the region since the last conference and the 3-year work plan 2018-2020. Of particular note was the execution and plans of high-level and technical visits, the ongoing visits to regional training centres to find synergies in support of the CB plans, the past and future phases of the HydrOMAOC project to identify funding by linking hydrography with other larger maritime and marine related projects in the region. The meeting was also pleased to note the benefits of having an awareness seminar preceding the meeting, where coastal states were be informed of their international obligations, the need for better cooperation within the region and the value of their hydrographic information.

The status and implementation of the regional INT and ENC charting schemes were reviewed by the regional coordinator for INT Region G (France), including the process for monitoring and managing charts and the chart schemes. The meeting also considered how the IHO CB Programme can support coastal states to prepare for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) with respect to the provision of hydrographic services, taking as example the successful support to Cabo Verde in 2017 by means of a technical visit.

In accordance with the Statutes of the Commission, Commodore CD Okafor from Nigeria and Rear Admiral Carlos Ventura Soares assumed duties, respectively, as Chair and Vice-Chair at the end of the Conference. The next Conference is expected to take place in Lisbon, Portugal in the week of 28 September to 2 October 2020.

The EAtHC15 Conference was preceded by a Regional Awareness Seminar on Maritime Geospatial Knowledge on 15 and 16 October, in the same venue. The Seminar was opened by Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas, Chief of the Naval Staff, Nigerian Navy, who highlighted the importance of hydrography for the social and economic development in the region. The seminar was co-located with an industry exhibition. Representatives of 17 coastal States, IHO, IMO, IALA, IOC, and the local Academy, Industry and Government participated in the seminar.



Participants of the Regional Awareness Seminar on Maritime Geospatial Knowledge that preceded the EAtHC15 Conference

Participants and lecturers actively participated in topics ranging from the work of the IHO, IMO and IALA, compliance with international obligations, the IHO CB Strategy and the importance of accurate nautical information, hydrographic awareness and its economic benefits, the need for National Hydrographic Coordination Committees, the need for working with the primary charting authorities, the need to integrate the Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) to the national SDIs and examples of national achievements in the region.