

EASTERN ATLANTIC HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (EAtHC)
8th Meeting, Brest, France, 28-29 October 2004

REPORT FROM THE IHB

Presentation made by Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA, IHB Director

Director of the Hydrographic Institute of Portugal and chairman of the EAtHC,
Vice Admiral Carlos Alberto VIEGAS Filipe,
Director of the Service Hydrographique et Oceanographique de la Marine
Monsieur l'Ingénieur général de première classe de l'armement Yves DESNOËS
Hydrographers of Nigeria and Spain
National Hydrographic Authorities,
Representatives of National Hydrographic Authorities,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It constitutes a great honour for me, to represent the Directing Committee of the International Hydrographic Bureau, in this 8th Meeting of the East Atlantic Hydrographic Commission, and to find myself surrounded by so many good old and new friends. I would like therefore to thank Admiral Viegas, Hydrographer of Portugal and Chairman of EAtHC for having invited the IHB to be present at this meeting.

The BHI follows very closely the development of the diverse activities undertaken by the Hydrographic Regional Commissions, and it considers them as a real partner in the execution of the agreements adopted by the Organization at the International Hydrographic Conferences as well as through the correspondence exchanged between Conferences.

It is the role of the International Hydrographic Bureau to facilitate the association of the hydro/cartographic efforts developed by the National Hydrographic Services aiming safety of life at sea, safety to navigation and protection of the marine environment, as well as contributing to the development of other productive activities such as recreational, defence, marine science and technology, of direct impact to the economy of maritime countries.

At the 7th Meeting held in 2002, among other matters, I mainly referred to the responsibility of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions in the fulfilment of the IHO Work Programme. In this opportunity I will make emphasis on the importance that RHCs have as regard to the IHO objectives. Also I will refer to some precise aspects of direct relation to this region.

Each Regional Hydrographic Commission faces different realities, either from the point of view of their particular geography or their capacities – due to diverse factors - to offer hydro-cartographic services and safety to the local, regional and international mariner. The existence of a RHC is justified as a tool to combine the efforts for the identification of common problems and to search for solutions that are acceptable, advisable and viable both, from an economic and technological point of view. The Organization as a whole is therefore favoured due to the exchange of experiences obtained under each RHC, experiences that the IHB collects and shares among all existing RHCs.

The fulfilment of the objectives of the OHI is highly favoured if RHCs are active, and that to happen, requires that member countries not only express their willingness and desire to participate, but to be actively involved. 23 States exist in the region of influence of the EAtHC, all of them members of the International Maritime Organization (IMO); 19 are members of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC); 9 are members of the International Association of Aids to Navigation and Lighthouses Authorities (IALA) and only 6 are members of the IHO, of which 1 lamentably has its rights suspended. As it can be appreciated, the picture is not very promissory.

Out of these 6 States, only 3 participate in the Working Groups of the IHO. It is to say that we think that this is not a good sign and steps should be adopted to improve the participation in the IHO subsidiary groups. Not to do it, is to resign voluntarily to the cooperative and collaborative work the IHO offers, that certainly contributes to the national interests of each one of the maritime countries in this region.

Next I will try to provide in a summarized form, information on the accomplishment of the IHO Program of Work so far reached since the 7th EAtHC meeting, with special emphasis on matters relevant to this RHC, proposing certain initiatives, when found it necessary:

Program 1

Cooperation between States Member and with International Organizations

- **IMO**

The SOLAS issue, specially new Regulation 9 of chapter V, that refers to Hydrographic Services, has motivated an active and fruitful relationship between IHO and IMO to the effects of promoting joint initiatives that tend to facilitate the fulfilment of this Regulation by Contracting Governments. It is considered of value that at a national level, maritime and hydrographic authorities seek to work together this challenging matter.

To offer hydrographic services stopped from being a voluntary activity, to constitute an obligation for the Governments Part of SOLAS. It is for that reason that the IMO has considered and endorsed IHO recommendations, moreover in December 2003 adopted resolution (A.958(23) inviting Governments to promote the use of ECDIS and production of ENC's; to cooperate in the collection and dissemination of hydrographic data; to promote the support of technical attendance and to establish hydrographic offices where they do not exist, and more than that, IMO has made a call to those that are not members of the OHI, to consider joining the organization.

On this aspect, the IHB is ready to collaborate with all national or regional initiative that might help in achieving the objective of this IMO resolution. In my capacity of Director of the IHB I am at your disposition during these couple of days to continue considering this subject with anybody requiring more information.

- **IOC**

As you might be aware a joint IHO/IOC project known as GEBCO and other regional bathymetric projects known as IBC projects exist.

The IHB has been working jointly with the IOC Secretariat in order to find the necessary mechanisms to liase these efforts and to optimise the ocean mapping global program. At the present time a proposal for a new organizational structure of the Program of Oceanic Cartography is circulating between IHO and IOC MS, collecting opinions to improve such proposal.

One of the practical aspects to consider, is that the meetings of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions could be held in conjunction with the meetings of the regional projects, or at least that a strong link should exist between them, in order to optimise the use of resources, to really avoid duplication and to make the best and wider possible use of the available bathymetric data, for regional benefit.

- **UN**

The IHO has been represented in UNICPOLOS and at the United Nations Assembly where it has an observer status. In both tribunes matters related to the ocean and the law of the sea have been treated and the most part is reflected in Resolution 58/240 where the Assembly recognizes that hydrographic surveys and nautical charts are vital for the security to navigation and life at sea, for the protection of the marine environment, the economy of shipping and sustainable fishing, maritime delimitations and other related maritime activities.

The Resolution makes special mention to the work of the IHO and its RHCs; promotes increase in membership given the capacity of the organization to provide technical assistance, to facilitate training and to identify sources to fund the development of

hydrographic services. It invites the continuation of the joint work with IMO and challenges to intensify the necessary efforts to increase the capacity of developing countries, in particular those less developed and those developing State Island, to improve hydrographic services and nautical chart production.

As it should be understood we have in this UN resolution a powerful tool. On one side Governments cannot ignore the importance UN assigns to hydrography in the development of projects of socio-economic impact and on the other hand, financing agencies could begin to consider with carefully and with priority hydrographic projects submitted for their consideration, given the multiplying impact that has investing in projects with hydro-cartographic components.

The conditions are given to benefit from this resolution. The opportunity exists, but coordination and hard work are needed. Nothing will happen if a passive attitude is adopted. The IHB can help to put the Commission's initiatives in motion, but necessarily the success will depend on the assigned national priority and the degree of self activity as assigned by each one of the participants.

**Program 2
Capacity Building**

- **IMA**

The International Maritime Academy, IMA, has informed the IHB that starting 2005 it is planned to run annually a hydrographic and a nautical cartography course, ending a period in which this important support was diminished due to budgetary restrictions. It is recommended to take advantage of these opportunities as they arise, and the Commission could consider developing a capacity building program considering the regional particularities, so that it could serve as an information source for:

- a) the CBC
- b) the determination of needs
- c) the scholarships selection process

- **IHOBC**

From the region, only France participates in the mentioned Committee established in the year 2003. The second meeting is to be held next month in Fiji. At the appropriate agenda item, more information will be provided on the activities of this Committee.

- **Reintegration of suspended IHO Member States.**

Actions have been taken by the IHB in order to reincorporate Democratic Republic of Congo and to make this maritime country exert its rights in the OHI. This is considered a permanent task for the IHB and from time to time this country is approached in order to maintain it updated on the changes that are taking place in the international arena, that make even more important to consider the reintegration to the IHO. Unfortunately we have received no feed back.

**Program 3
Support of Techniques and Standards**

- **Study made by WEND**

WEND committed itself on a mission to promote, accelerate the production and the improvement of the availability of ENC's. Therefore WEND lead a study to learn about the availability of ENC's and the needs required to increase production. The result of the survey identified needs for assistance and the availability of assistance, a summary of which is provided next:

Member State	Need Assistance	Interest in receiving	Comments	Prepared to provide	

		assistance		assistance	
France	No	-		Yes	Normally according to bilateral agreements between States.
Morocco	Yes	Yes	Morocco benefits from technical assistance financed through the European Union (MedChartNet). That said Morocco still needs additional assistance from other countries in ENC production and particularly suffers from a lack of "know-how".	No	Morocco is not a producer country of ENCs, but hopes to become a producer country in the not too distant future and would then be happy to provide technical assistance.
Portugal	No	-	-	Yes	To Member States of EAthC and SAIHC, preferably those with Portuguese as official language.
Spain	No	-	Spain has established a production line for ENC and does not require technical assistance. Nevertheless, Spain is maintaining contacts with neighbouring countries to clear up technical issues related to production.	-	Due to staff limitations, Spain is in principle unable to offer technical assistance in the wide sense. Nevertheless, it could be considered for certain cases.

Four Countries of the region answered, but only one requested and expressed the willingness to receive technical assistance to produce ENCs. Two indicated that they were prepared to provide technical assistance.

The request of information was a step forward, but in no case the replies are representative of the reality of the 23 countries in the region. The task to prepare the publication S-55 that will be covered under a special item on the agenda, surely will provide us with more information.

- **MoHWG**

The IHB has been monitoring the preparation of the Hydrographic Manual, which we hope to have it ready by the beginning of 2005. It has not been easy to carry out this task, as the

persons assigned by Member States for this work have not had the requested availability of time as initially envisaged.

In any case, the product will be soon available in English. As regard to a French versions of the Manual, the IHB will contact SHOM for support. In the case of the Spanish version, at the MACHC meeting it was agreed to consider a joint effort between the Spanish speaking countries to progress on the translation as soon as the final version in English is available.

- **S-55**

In the corresponding agenda item of this meeting the project leader of the Publication S-55 will brief us in detail about it and therefore it does not make sense to provide details at this stage.

- **FIG/IHO/ICA International Advisory Board. Courses and M-8.**

The Board registers 7 recognized hydrographic programmes as being delivered by learned institutions belonging to countries members of this commission. Three in French, two in Portuguese and two in Spanish.

As far as nautical cartography training is concern, the first edition of the standards is available since last year and only IMA has applied for recognition and obtained for category B and Category A is under consideration by the IAB for their programme.

- **Projects GEBCO/IBC**

I have mentioned earlier the intention to optimise the ocean bathymetry chart programme. In this line, and thanks to a special contribution of the Nippon Foundation, during three years 7 students a year will be trained in bathymetry and related disciplines at the University of New Hampshire. This year's course considered one student from the region, Mr MUSTAPHA, Abubakar Abdullahi from the Nigerian Navy Hydrographic Office. Developing MS should be encouraged to get ready to put forward names of candidates for the next two calls. The second course will start in September 2005.

Program 4

Public Relations and Information Management

- **IHO Web site**

The IHB has dedicated great time to improve the structure and content of the IHO web site, and by all means tries to maintain it as updated as possible, task impossible to fulfil unless contributions are received from MSs.

The IHB considers that the Web site is an excellent communication tool for both, MSs and IHO Working Groups of the Organization.

We have also taken note on the efficient and effective improvement made in the access to Circular Letters and most of the IHO Publications, as well as the access to the work and progress made by different working groups of the Organization. The IHB encourages MSs to make full use of this powerful tool.

In this same line, it is urged that MSs that do not have implemented its institutional web pages, to do so, in order to facilitate the coordination and consultations processes between hydrographic services and with the IHB.

- **Annual Report**

The format of the IHO Annual Report obeys to the Work Program corresponding to the year is being reported. Its printed version has a limited distribution in order not to incur in excessive expenses, but such publication is available free of charge at the IHO web site.

The IHB will appreciate any improvement that EAHC could identify to improve these two services, the web site and the Annual Report.

Program 5

General Development of the Organization

- **WP AND BUDGET**

The IHB has been trying to tie the IHO Work Programme with the Annual Budget, and certain information has been so far provided to MSs. In effect, and as regard to 2005 proposal, a complete explanation of both documents has been incorporated in the documentation submitted for comments to the Members of the Finance Committee, later these documents will be put for MSs consideration.

Unfortunately the IHB practically does not receive comments or suggestions from MSs, when these have been asked for. In effect and as an example, in average the IHB does not receive replies / comments but from 40% / 50% on matters raised by Circular Letters. Answers also arrive with an extraordinary delay.

At the IHB we have confirmed that Hydrographic Offices that have assigned a person as a permanent nexus with the IHB, that is to say, somebody with the mission to be aware of the incoming and out going documentation related to IHB, are permanently up to date on the events and indeed, in a position to contribute timely and effectively with the organization.

- **SPWG**

One of the relevant activities that IHO has been carrying out has been under the control of the SPWG. The final product of the SPWG is a Report that has circulated attached to CCL No 2, together with proposals to be discussed at the 3^d EIHC. Member States have been requested to provide their comments on the Proposals, including any alternative or amendment to the texts proposed, to reach the IHB by 01 November 2004.

- **Hydrographic Conference the Extraordinary International**

As you should be aware, the 3^d EIHC will take place in Monaco, 11 - 15 April, 2005. This conference has been decided to exclusively deal with the proposals of the SPWG, and the IHB has already begun the count down of this event. Until now 10 circular letters have been distributed and a special section has been organized at the IHO web site, to concentrate all the necessary information needed by MSs.

Well, I think I have finalized this brief partial count on what has been done at the IHB since the last EAtHC meeting.

I reiterate my disposition to treat any subject found to be relevant, at any time during these couple of days.

Finally I would like to reiterate my thanks to the Hydrographer of Portugal, Chairman of the EAtHC for his kind invitation and to the Director of SHOM for hosting this meeting. I wish you all a very fruitful meeting.

Thank you very much.