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Punta del Este - Uruguay

WP 11

**HCA10-INF5**

Agenda Item: ATCM 10,  
CEP 5  
Presented by: Uruguay  
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## **Forwarding of hydrographic data collected during the IPY**



## Forwarding of hydrographic data collected during the IPY

### **Background**

The International Polar Year (IPY) 2007 – 2008 was organized to promote the move toward an era of advancement in scientific knowledge and the understanding of the polar regions and to leave an lasting legacy comprising continuous observation systems, greater coordination and cooperation in international research, stronger links between researchers of different disciplines and bodies of reference data allowing for comparisons with the past and the future, while at the same time facilitating the training of the next generation of committed polar researchers and ensuring full commitment from and information for the public at large and authorities around the world on the purpose and merits of polar research (ATCM XXXII WP 48 *IPY Report: Accomplishments and Challenges*).

During the period in question, there was an unprecedented improvement in ocean and ice observations (ATCM XXXII WP 48 *IPY Report: Accomplishments and Challenges*), but it is essential to ensure access to and management of these observations and the data collected with a view to ensuring the legacy of the IPY (ATCM XXXII WP 6 *Enhancing the legacy of the International Polar Year in Antarctica*).

As the data policy clearly states, IPY data are to be defined as all data generated from March 2007 to March 2009 within the framework of specific IPY projects as approved by the ICSU/WMO Projects Committee. It is essential that all these data be made freely, completely and openly available as soon as possible.

The importance of this issue is such that it has been reiterated on a number of occasions, including in Resolution 6 (2009) *Ensuring the legacy of the International Polar Year*, where it is recommended that Parties “*preserve, store and exchange reliable, accessible, long-term IPY data*”, as well as in the Washington Ministerial Declaration on the International Polar Year and Polar Science, where the Member States of the Arctic Council and the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties “*call upon IPY participants to continue to make data collected under IPY 2007-2008 and its legacy programs available in an open and timely manner, recall the obligations related to exchange of scientific information to this effect in the Antarctic Treaty, and encourage the same spirit of scientific openness among Arctic researchers*”.

At the same time, in response to maritime accidents of recent years and in anticipation of the expected increase in maritime traffic, the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) – a Special Hydrographic Commission of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) – has called upon other international organizations to cooperate and coordinate efforts with the HCA to improve the safety of life at sea, the safety of navigation, the protection of the marine environment and scientific research in the Antarctic (ATCM XXXII *IHO Report on Cooperation in Hydrographic Surveying and Charting of Antarctic Waters*).

Even the SCAR has highlighted the need for high-quality bathymetric charts, not just for navigation purposes but also for scientific ends, and has recommended that all countries with vessels using multibeam acoustic sonar in the Southern Ocean chart the vessels’ courses in such a way that they cover current gaps in bathymetric charting, and that the resulting data be submitted to the appropriate global body responsible for managing the data, primarily through the International Bathymetric Chart of the Southern Ocean (IBCSO) (ATCM XXXI *IHO Report*).

Given the need for hydrographic information, the ATCM recommended in Resolution 5 (2008) *Hydrographic surveying and charting* that the Parties “*forward any Antarctic hydrographic and bathymetric data collected to the relevant international chart producer for charting action*”.

Following on from the implementation of the above-mentioned Resolution, the HCA has recently developed, in conjunction with the COMNAP, user-friendly, updated products and formats to be used as tools for the forwarding of the data collected.

However, there is still a need for improved coordination between the national Antarctic authorities, IPY committees and hydrographic authorities, to improve the management of hydrographic data collected under the auspices of the IPY.

Now that the two-year period of the IPY has concluded, there is a large amount of hydrographic data available in the various IPY Committee programs, which could be forwarded to the national centers for hydrographic data and considered for use in the improvement of nautical charts. This would represent just one of many possible advantages of making the data available to the centers for hydrographic data.

We therefore feel that it would be advisable to urge the Parties to ensure that their national IPY committees forward hydrographic and bathymetric data to the national hydrographic authorities, so that these authorities can in turn inform the HCA of the availability of these data for use in the improvement of nautical charts, thereby contributing to improved navigation in the Antarctic Treaty Area.

For this reason, we hereby submit the following draft Resolution for the consideration of the ATCM.

## **Resolution ... (2010)**

### **The contribution of the IPY to hydrographic knowledge of Antarctic waters**

The Representatives,

*Considering* the appeal made by the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) of the International Hydrographic Organization with respect to improving collection of hydrographic data and charting in the Antarctic region;

*Noting* the increase in scientific expeditions in the Southern Ocean as part of the International Polar Year (IPY) 2007 – 2008;

*Considering* that vessels of the national programs and others linked to the IPY are being urged to compile, whenever possible, hydrographic and bathymetric data on all Antarctic voyages;

*Acknowledging* that access to and management of observations and data collected during the IPY is fundamental to ensuring the legacy of the IPY;

*Taking into account* the fact that new forms of data forwarding have been developed since the publication of Resolution 5 (2008);

**Recommend** that governments and the ATCM:

- 1) Support and promote contacts and liaisons between national IPY committees and national hydrographic offices.
- 2) Endeavour to ensure that hydrographic and bathymetric data collected during the IPY be forwarded by the national IPY committees to the national hydrographic services using the formats developed to this end, and to instruct those responsible to give the HCA access to the full inventory of data so that they can be considered for use in the production of international nautical charts under the international charting scheme coordinated by the HCA.
- 3) Promote liaison and cooperation between national hydrographic offices and the HCA to ensure the legacy of the IPY in the field of hydrography, thereby contributing to the improvement of nautical charts and the safety of navigation in Antarctic Treaty waters.