



**The 10th Meso American & Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission Meeting
3-6 November 2009, Bridgetown Barbados
Country Report – Antigua**

General

1. Antigua and Barbuda is a contracting government to the SOLAS Convention, and despite being faced with resource constraints and other militating factors, it is committed to meeting its obligations under SOLAS regulations V/4 and V/9 pertaining to navigational warnings and hydrographic services respectively.
2. Mindful of this commitment, Antigua and Barbuda became an associate member of the International Hydrographic Organization Meso American and Caribbean Hydrographic Commission in October 2006, to use this forum as a vehicle to enhance the delivery of its national hydrographic services.
3. At present there exists an improvised arrangement for the delivery of hydrographic services, which is undertaken within the purview of the Port Authority. This arrangement is presently under review with the intention of strengthening the institutional framework and the human and capital resources required to optimize efficiency.
4. The Antigua and Barbuda Department of Marine Services and Merchant Shipping (ADOMS), acting as the Maritime Administration, is desirous of having a hydrographic office setup under the aegis of a suitable government agency, either within its own organization or within the Government Survey Department, depending on the best fit. This is a critical component of the preparation phase as Antigua and Barbuda is expected register to undergo the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit in 2010.

Roles and Functions of the proposed National Hydrographic Office

5. This rejuvenated hydrographic office will be mandated to:
 - a. Coordinate maritime surveys in coastal waters and ports within the archipelagic jurisdiction of Antigua and Barbuda;
 - b. Monitor and report changes within the coastline of the State;
 - c. Monitor and register all marine works carried out within the State's jurisdiction;

- d. Amalgamate the works of the Government Survey Department, Fisheries Division, Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority, the Department of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Development Control Authority, as they affect the maritime space.
- e. Deliver timely and up-to-date information and hydrographic data to the appropriate regulating or responsible international agencies, in accordance with contracting State's obligation.
- f. Liaise with the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) regarding nautical cartography (both paper and electronic) and the production of nautical charts for the harbours and ports of Antigua and Barbuda and their approaches.
- g. Manage all hydrographic data and functions.

Current Activities

- 6. **Surveys:** Currently all surveys to be done in the harbours and within littoral waters have to be contracted out since Antigua has no dedicated vessel or equipment to undertake hydrographic work. The frequency and effectiveness of such surveys are therefore affected by financial constraints. One possible short term solution is to acquire an appropriate portable echo sounder and the applicable software, and train Coast Guard personnel, and/or ADOMS personnel, to install and operate them onboard a suitable vessel within a government agency's inventory.
- 7. **Chart Publication:** The UKHO continues to produce paper charts for Antigua and Barbuda's waters. The Port Authority presently has the obligation of providing the pertinent data for updating local charts.
- 8. **ENC Coverage:** In keeping with its pending obligation under the proposed amendments to SOLAS Regulations 19, Antigua and Barbuda, in August 2009, granted authority to the UKHO to undertake the necessary steps to produce the requisite *Electronic Navigational Charts* coverage, based on the Admiralty paper charts for Antigua and Barbuda's national ports, coastal waters, and their approaches.
- 9. **MSI:** The ABDF Coast Guard presently broadcast marine weather information and navigational warnings; however there is an urgent need for the modernization of the communication equipment and repeaters to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of the service provided. In this regard the local yachting and cruise sector is underserved.

Future Activities

10. **GMDSS** - Antigua and Barbuda is committed to finding a solution to ensure that the ABDF Coast Guard's Search and Rescue operations are bolstered by the acquisition and commissioning of an appropriate shore based GMDSS within sea Area 1.
11. **AIS Live** – ADOMS has given a commitment to the purchasing of an appropriate AIS equipment to be installed in St John's so as to provide live AIS data to the global network, and to give access to the port state control officers and the ABDF Coast Guard in order to enhance maritime safety and security operations. The delivery of this project is estimated to be March 2010.

Major Maritime Projects under Consideration

12. Expansion of the Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority. This project entails the addition of a finger pier of six hundred feet by one hundred feet. In addition a new coping wall along with sheet pilings will be constructed. Plans have been completed and published with the final proposed document available for perusal. The Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority is currently doing an analysis of the financial aspect of the project.
13. Construction of a new docking facility on the sister Island of Barbuda. This project is known as the River Dock Facility (RDF) and consists of a finger pier. This will be purpose built to accommodate two medium size cruise ships. It will be the first of its kind on that island as it presently has no suitable ship docking facility, and should spawn other coastal developments within the vicinity.

Conclusion

14. Antigua and Barbuda is dedicated to playing its role in improving navigational safety and therefore supports the IMO and the IHO initiatives in this regard. In light of this commitment, the hydrographic services presently provided are being reviewed and rationalized to strengthen the institutional framework. It is envisaged that this will be complemented by the timely supply of trained personnel and capital with the support of international agencies as necessary.
15. ADOMS is committed to playing a pivotal role in this renewal process as it embarks on the journey to have Antigua and Barbuda successfully complete the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit.