

MESO-AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN SEA
HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION

10th Meeting – December 5-9, 2011

Basseterre, St. Kitts

National Report 2011 - Jamaica

1. HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE:

- **Reorganization**

Jamaica is a member State of the IHO and the Meso-America and Caribbean Hydrographic Commission (MACHC). A National Hydrographic Committee (NHC) constituted of membership from key maritime interest groups and stakeholders including the Hydrographic office (NLA), Jamaica Defense Force Coast Guards (JDFCG), Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ), Maritime Authority of Jamaica (MAJ), Caribbean Maritime Institute (CMI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MOFF&T), The University of Technology (UTech) and the Centre for Marine Sciences at the University of the West Indies has been in existence since 2006, as a committee of the National Council on Ocean and Coastal Zone Management. This council is an advisory body to the Cabinet and is chaired by the Minister of State in the MFA&FT.

Terms of reference for the National Hydrographic Committee (NHC) were developed based on the framework provided by the IHB.

The National Land Agency of Jamaica (NLA) has responsibility for hydrographic surveying. Under Government's recent restructuring arrangements the NLA was re-assigned to the portfolio of the Ministry of Housing, Water and Local Government. There has been no significant impact on the operations of the NLA or the Hydrographic Unit as a result of this reorganization.

2. SURVEYS:

- **Coverage of new surveys.**

Since our last report to the MACHC, no major hydrographic survey has been carried out. However, small surveys carried out include:

- a. Monitoring surveys during dredging operations at the Bauxite shipment port in Discovery Bay.
- b. Routine investigative surveys in the main ship channel in Kingston Harbour

- **New technologies and /or equipment**

No new hydrography related technology or equipment has been acquired by the NLA since the last National Report to the 11th MACHC meeting. However, The Government of Jamaica has established an island wide GPS Virtual Reference System (VRS) framework, which facilitates high accuracy real time positioning during coastal and harbour hydrographic surveys

- **New ships**

Currently Jamaica has no vessels dedicated to carrying out hydrographic survey work

3. CHARTS AND PUBLICATIONS:

a. Charts

Charts for Jamaica are produced by the UKHO, under cooperative arrangement. The PAJ and the NLA provide new data for chart updating as it becomes available. Paper charts for the Falmouth Harbour are currently being updated. The UKHO can speak more authoritatively to the production of ENC's, RNC's and other charts

US charting agencies also produce a number of charts for general use in Jamaica's maritime space.

b. Publications

- New publications
No update on new publications is available at this time.
- Updated publications
Information for updating of hydrographic publications are routinely dispatched to the UKHO.

4. MSI

- **Existing infrastructure for transmission**

The JDF Coast Guard (JDFCG) broadcasts marine weather information and navigational safety warnings five times daily on both marine VHF and HF. This is done from their 24X7 operational centre in Kingston.

Notices to Mariners are generated by the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ) and promulgated locally and internationally in keeping with our obligations under SOLAS V, regulation 9. MSI notices are conveyed to the JDFCG for immediate broadcast in the interest of safety of ships and small crafts. In addition these notices are also communicated directly to yacht clubs, Fisheries Department agents and other known interest groups to ensure the widest possible distribution.

The timely passage of relevant information to both the JDFCG and the PAJ to include standard WWNWS methods are being pursued with JDFCG as the lead entity.

- **New infrastructure in accordance with GMDSS Master Plan.**

No update on the last report is available at this time

5. CAPACITY BUILDING

- **Offer of and/or demand for Capacity Building**

The hydrographic office continues to experience some degree of difficulty in programming hydrographic survey activities due to the lack of a dedicated survey vessel.

- **Training received, needed, offered**

No update on hydrographic training is available at this time.

- **Status of national, bilateral, multilateral or regional development projects with hydrographic component. (In progress, planned, under evaluation or study)**

No update available at this time.

6. C-55 LATEST UPDATE

The UKHO provides the information for the updating of the C-55 database. This data is current.

7. OCEANOGRAPHIC ACTIVITIES

- Tide gauge network
Efforts are underway to install new tide gauges at Port Antonio and Montego Bay to supplement the single tide gauge now in place at Port Royal.
- New equipment- Nil

8. Other

IMO – VIMSAS Audit

Jamaica participated in the Voluntary IMO audit in September of this year (2011). We found the exercise to be rewarding, as it afforded us the opportunity to examine and strengthen our institutional arrangements, policies and operational procedures relating to the implementation of our obligations and responsibilities for maritime safety and protection of the environment. The results of the audit are not available at this time.

Two things that keep us awake at night

The Hydrographic Office continues to bemoan the lack of a dedicated hydrographic survey vessel to facilitate a prioritized programme of hydrographic survey activities and more effectively utilize the trained personnel at its disposal.

We are also anxious to upgrade the quality of the hydrographic data available for two of our ecologically and economically important offshore fishing banks – the Morant and Pedro Banks – which are in need of systematic surveys to modern standards.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The hydrographic office, the NLA, continues to play its part in providing hydrographic data to facilitate safety of navigation in Jamaica's territorial waters, within the resources available. However, Resource constraints continue to militate against us playing a greater role in providing more comprehensive and critical hydrographic data sets for some areas.