

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) share a long history of cooperation and working together. Indeed, the formal cooperation arrangement between IMO and IHO goes back to 1963 when the then Assembly of IMCO, as IMO was then called, at its third session, adopted a resolution on relations with the International Hydrographic Bureau.

In view of this long-standing relationship, it was of great satisfaction for the Secretary General to sign, in December 2013, an Agreement of Cooperation between our two Organizations to both reconfirm our strong bonds of the past and provide a clear framework for future cooperation.///

In that regard, it is my pleasure, on behalf of the Secretary General, to convey best wishes for the success of this 15th meeting of the MESO American and Caribbean Hydrographic Commission and to share that the IMO Assembly, at its 28th session, endorsed his recommendation that IMO Members that are not yet members of IHO should consider joining the IHO, given that its objectives with regard to the safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment are so closely related to those of IMO and it is his hope that many will do so and do so, soon.///

Today's presentation will cover the material decisions out of the 1st Session of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation, Communication and Search and Rescue (NCSR), the 94th Session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), the 64th Session of the Technical Cooperation Committee, an update on the IMO Member State Audit Scheme and developments in the region.///

NCSR

Turning to the work of the Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) Sub-Committee, in July of this year, the inaugural meeting of the NCSR discussed matters including routing of ships, ship reporting, e-navigation, review and modification of the GMDSS and the draft Polar Code.

The Sub-Committee, meeting for its 1st session, finalized the chapters related to Safety of Navigation and Communication of the draft Polar Code, for submission to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). MSC 94, adopted the Polar Code and related amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) to make it mandatory.

The Polar Code covers the full range of design, construction, equipment, operational, training, search and rescue and environmental protection matters relevant to ships operating in the inhospitable waters surrounding the two poles.

Ships trading in the polar regions already have to comply with all relevant international standards adopted by IMO, but the newly adopted SOLAS Chapter XIV "Safety measures for ships operating in polar waters", adds additional requirements, by making mandatory the Polar Code.

The Polar Code highlights the potential hazards of operating in polar regions, including ice, remoteness and rapidly changing and severe weather conditions, and provides goals and functional requirements in relation to ship design, construction, equipment, operations, training, and search and rescue, relevant to ships operating in Arctic and Antarctic waters.

The expected date of entry into force of the SOLAS amendments is 1 January 2017, under the tacit acceptance procedure. It will apply to new ships constructed after that date. Ships constructed before 1 January 2017 will be required to meet the relevant requirements of the Polar Code by the first intermediate or renewal survey, whichever occurs first, after 1 January 2018.

Because it contains both safety and environment related provisions, the Polar Code will be mandatory under both SOLAS and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

The IHO has contributed to the safety considerations contained within the Polar Code, related specifically to the generally unsatisfactory state of the underlying hydrographic surveys from which existing nautical charts in the polar regions are derived.

Statistics show a lack of adequate hydrographic surveys in nearly 95 per cent of the polar regions. This has obvious implications, not only for the safe operation of an increasing number of ships, but also for the continued protection of the environment and for the sustainable management of the polar regions in general.

All activities in the maritime domain rely, in some way or another, on knowledge of the depth of the sea and the nature of any hazards or obstacles that lie on the sea floor. In the case of the polar regions, much of this information simply does not exist. This is a major concern and one that, in the view of the Secretary General, is shared by IHO; and Member States are encouraged to address this issue as a matter of urgency.///

The Sub-Committee approved the new and amended ships' routing measures and amended ship reporting system, for submission to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) for adoption:

The amendments to existing Traffic Separation Schemes (TSSs) and associated measures are listed for your consideration in greater detail at your own leisure

Routing measures other than Traffic Separation Schemes (TSSs) were also agreed and listed here.

The amendments were adopted by MSC 94.///

The Sub-Committee finalized the draft e-navigation Strategy Implementation Plan (SIP), which includes recommended tasks to progress the implementation of e-navigation, for submission to the MSC for approval.

The e-navigation concept aims to integrate existing and new navigational tools, in particular electronic tools, in an all-embracing system that will contribute to enhanced navigational safety while simultaneously reducing the burden on the navigator. The objective is to facilitate a holistic approach to the interaction between shipboard and shore-based users, under an overarching e-navigation architecture.

The five prioritized e-navigation solutions set out in the Strategy Implementation Plan are listed. The SIP sets out proposed regulatory framework and technical requirements for implementation for each solution, with a timeline for completion by 2019.

The MSC approved the e-navigation Strategy Implementation Plan (SIP) and a number of tasks have been identified for development and completion during the period 2015 to 2019.///

The Sub-Committee moved forward with its review of the Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS), approving the high-level review which was prepared by a correspondence group and further developed by the IMO/International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Experts Group.

The high-level review proposes some revisions to the functional requirements in the current SOLAS Chapter IV, Radiocommunications, which was adopted in 1988 with a full phase-in of its requirements by 1999. The current Chapter IV sets out the undertakings by contracting governments to provide radiocommunications services as well as ship requirements for carriage of radiocommunications equipment, in order to improve the chances of rescue following an accident. The modernization plan, which aims to take into account new technologies available, is expected to be completed in 2016 and approved in 2017.

The Sub-Committee further progressed the work under the detailed GMDSS review. Issues under consideration for the detailed review include: revised definitions for sea areas A3 and A4; usage of satellite systems in coastal areas; use of voice communications; the expected evolution of satellite EPIRB systems, such as the Medium Earth Orbit Search And Rescue system (MEOSAR); and the review of existing systems considered for replacement, and existing and new systems for inclusion in the modernized GMDSS.

A Correspondence Group on the Review of the GMDSS was re-established to develop proposals on issues identified in the draft outcome of the detailed review of the GMDSS and submit an interim report to the Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group, followed by a report to the next Sub-Committee session (NCSR 2).

TCC

The 64th Meeting of the Technical Cooperation Committee (TCC) considered a brief analysis of the data that the Member States had communicated to IMO in relation to their Country Maritime Profiles (CMP) and reaffirmed its previous decisions that the CMPs were not intended to replace national or regional technical cooperation related events and that the ITCP should continue to include a right mixture of national and regional events, as the latter were key to developing intraregional cooperation and coordination.

Recognized that, at this stage, the CMP was still a work in progress and would be further developed by the Committee taking into account the experience gained from its use so as to include the minimum and essential questions in the context of what was intended.

Agreed that the CMP was one of several tools that the Secretariat could use in developing proposals to be included in the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) and that it was not the sole or exclusive tool being used to that end, in particular at this stage, when the CMP concept was still being developed and refined.

The Committee noted the suggestion that consideration might need to be given to the development of regional or sub-regional CMPs which would reflect the collective views of the countries of the specific region concerned.

Also noted was the suggestion that the questions in the CMPs might need to be reviewed so as to ensure that the information requirements were optimized and any ambiguities were removed, enabling countries completing the CMPs to answer with confidence and ensuring consistent and harmonized provision of data.

It was recognized that the completion and updating of the CMPs should not lead to an increase on the administrative burden of Member States, especially if the CMP template was to be amended at frequent intervals.///

The Committee urged Member States that had not yet completed their CMPs to do so as soon as possible, and to update them as and when it became necessary so as to provide current and correct information and also urged Member States that had already provided their CMPs to ensure that they were kept up to date.

Noted by the Committee was the intention of the Secretariat to modify the CMP to provide a way for Member States to communicate their technical assistance needs in a structured manner and, in this respect that it would keep the Member States informed by issuing appropriate circulars, as the circumstances warranted.

Proposals by the Secretariat that the ITCP for the 2016-2017 biennium would take into account – for the first time, to the extent that this was possible, and among others – the CMPs available in the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) module on the IMO website at the beginning of 2015 was noted by the Committee.

The Committee further noted the intention of the Secretariat to submit for consideration of the Committee, at its next session, an analysis of the CMPs that would be available in the GISIS module on the IMO website at the beginning of 2015 with a view to enabling the Committee to refine and target the CMPs for their intended uses as tools in the planning of the ITCP.

Member States are urged to contribute comments on the CMP at the meetings of the Senior Maritime Administrators which are to be held in Colombia for Central America and Trinidad and Tobago for the Caribbean in February 2015.///

IMSAS

Under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme, hydrographic activities fall within the area of coastal State obligations of Member States and the Scope of audit for coastal State activities is given in Part 3, paragraphs 45 – 51, of the IMO Instrument Implementation Code (III Code), resolution A.1070(28), as:

- 1 Implementation
- 2 Enforcement
- 3 Evaluation and review

In order to effectively meet their obligations, a coastal State should enact national legislation in order to give full effect to the provisions of the mandatory IMO instruments, develop policies and guidance which will assist in implementation and enforcement of their obligations, assign responsibilities within their Administration to update and revise any relevant policies, make available appropriate resources (human, financial, equipment, etc.) and implement effectively all relevant requirements from the mandatory IMO instruments.///

Costal State obligations are contained mainly in SOLAS 1974, Chapter V, and include the items listed here. Additionally, you may wish to note the Non-exhaustive list of obligations – Annex 3 to Resolution A.1077(28).///

SOLAS Chapter 5, Regulation 9 states obligations of interest to National Hydrographic Offices:

Paragraph 1 of the regulation obliges Contracting Governments to arrange for the collection and compilation of hydrographic data and the publication, dissemination and keeping up to date of all nautical information necessary for safe navigation.

Paragraph 2 of this regulation stipulates that Contracting Governments undertake to co-operate in carrying out, as far as possible, the nautical and hydrographic services, including:

- 2.1 ensuring that hydrographic surveying is carried out, as far as possible, adequate to the requirements of safe navigation;
- 2.2 preparing and issuing nautical charts, sailing directions, lists of lights, tide tables and other nautical publications, where applicable, satisfying the needs of safe navigation;
- 2.3 promulgating notices to mariners in order that nautical charts and publications are kept, as far as possible, up to date; and
- 2.4 providing data management arrangements to support these services.///

Paragraph 3 obliges Contracting Governments to ensure the greatest possible uniformity in charts and nautical publications and to take into account, whenever possible, relevant international resolutions and recommendations.

and

Paragraph 4. includes the obligation for Contracting Governments to co-ordinate their activities to the greatest possible degree in order to ensure that hydrographic and nautical information is made available on a world-wide scale as timely, reliably, and unambiguously as possible.///

In implementing hydrographic services, as per SOLAS 1974, regulation V/9, contracting Governments should take into account, wherever possible, appropriate resolutions and recommendations adopted by the International Hydrographic Organization, such as IHO standard S-44.

Valuable information can also be found in document MSC 81/24/4, prepared by IHO, which is intended for use by Member States, as a guidance document in implementation of hydrographic activities, and also by auditors, as an aid memoire in VIMSAS audits.///

In the production of nautical charts, which can be paper, raster or electronic navigational charts, IHO chart specifications are used to meet SOLAS 1974, regulation V/9. Hydrographic services also include the production of sailing directions, lists of lights, tide tables and other nautical publications, as well as preparation and promulgation of notices to mariners.///

Paragraph 3 of the III Code brings a new requirement for development of a STRATEGY as an effective mechanism for the State to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting its international obligations under the relevant IMO Conventions. "Maritime administration" is not a single corporate entity, but various responsibilities that are spread across many participating entities. There is a need to establish close co-operation among all of them, a clear description of responsibilities should be set for each entity and audit should be seen as a mechanism which provides an opportunity to identify areas for improvement.

This slide presents a possible division of responsibilities among various entities of a State. All of the entities should work together to contribute to the overall effectiveness of maritime administration. States may need to consider what will bring them together? What should come in the middle? How will the State be able to assess its overall effectiveness in meeting its international obligations under the mandatory IMO instruments?

An overall strategy should be seen as a mechanism which brings together all entities of a State, which participate in the implementation and enforcement of the mandatory IMO instruments. Collectively, they perform all functions of a maritime administration in a co-ordinated manner.

There may not be a single strategic document available in a State, but it can be a set of documents setting responsibilities, objectives, key performance indicators and planned activities for various entities of the State. However, an overall assessment of performance of all entities collectively should be carried out in a systematic manner.///

As at June 2014 the audit schedule, C 112/INF3, lists 173 audits to be implemented under IMSAS. It is planned to carry out approximately 25 audits per year to enable the auditing of all Member States in a 7-year audit cycle. Based on the schedule, a State that appears at 54 on the audit schedule, for example, can expect to be audited in 2018. Essentially, IMSAS introduces the concept of a global quality management system for the implementation and enforcement of State obligations and responsibilities related to maritime transport.///

Regional Developments

Within the region, at the High-Level Symposium held in Jamaica in 2013 the ministers responsible for maritime transport and their representatives committed themselves to the provision of adequate hydrographic services for ships navigating in the Caribbean region in accordance with applicable international instruments within the framework of regional and national maritime policies.

In that regard, the Council for Trade and Economic Development, COTED) of the CARICOM Community (CARICOM) established a Maritime Transport Committee (MTC), through its Regional Transport Commission (RTC), to consider the Jamaica 2013 High-Level Symposium Resolution. The MTC is developing a matrix of maritime projects for the consideration of the RTC.