

7th MEETING OF THE

MESO-AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION ACAPULCO, MEXICO, 4-7 OCTOBER 2006

The 7th Meeting of the Regional Hydrographic Commission of Meso-America and the Caribbean Sea was held at the Naval Base of the Mexican Navy, in Acapulco (Mexico) organized by the “Secretaría de Marina – Armada de Mexico”. Representatives from Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Jamaica, Latvia, Mexico, Netherlands (The), Trinidad & Tobago, UK, USA, Venezuela, IMO, FIG; IHB and commercial companies attended the meeting, that was chaired by Rear Admiral Del Angel (Mexico), who opened the meeting.

1. Chairman Report

The Chairman summarized the work carried out during the inter-sessional period. He reminded that Brazil had been admitted as a new member of the Commission during the Extraordinary Meeting held in 2005 in Veracruz and welcomed the Hydrographer of Argentina, who attended the meeting by special invitation of the Host country.

2. Agenda

The Agenda was approved with a minor amendment provided by US concerning the consideration of regional proposals and initiatives within the framework of the Capacity Building Plan.

Capt. Gorziglia reminded that the input from RHCs to prepare the IHO Work Programme 2008-2012 for submission to the 17th Conference had expired on 1st October.

The Commission decided to include this item in the Agenda for discussion and action.

3. Report on CB Seminar

Capt. Gorziglia summarized the results of the Seminar that had been conducted from 2 to 4 October. He emphasized that the Seminar had been successful and had achieved the results aimed and that the experience gained would be very useful for future similar events. While having raised awareness on the importance of hydrography for the countries in the region, the seminar also helped in identifying the main regional CB needs and opportunities.

4. MACHC Documents

.The Committee considered the draft Terms of Reference for the Commission’s Capacity Building Committee and Electronic Chart Committee as well as the new limits of the Commission, after the entrance of Brazil as a new member. A Working Group Cuba, Mexico, United States and Venezuela was formed to study these documents and work a proposal.

Capt. Suarez (Venezuela) and Col. Alun (Cuba) were elected respectively Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the newly formed CB Committee that also includes Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica and Mexico as members

The Chairman reminded members and associated members having not yet signed the Statutes to carry out that action as soon as possible.

5. IHO Strategic Planning Working Group

Lt. Cdr Ponce updated the meeting about the conclusion of the work assigned to the SPWG. The findings and conclusions of the WG are now submitted to the 17th IH Conference as Proposals to the Conference.

He also informed the meeting that the number of ratifications of the amendments to the Convention were ten (Mexico had ratified them very recently) and urged the rest of the countries of the Commission to do so.

Mexico presented, with the support of Brazil, for consideration of the Commission, a proposal to the 17th IH Conference about the definition of “Hydrographic Interest”. It was agreed to further study the subject. Also it was highlighted that the support from a third country would be required before its submission. to the IHB.

Another proposal about the procedure of selection of MACHC representatives to the future IHO Council was also tabled by Mexico. It was agreed that the other countries of the Commission will study the text proposed before taking a decision.

6. Reports from the MACHC Committees

Reports from the INT Chart Committee and the Electronic Chart Committee (Task Groups 1 and 2) were tabled.

The reports included information about the status of regional production of INT charts and ENC's, small scale INT Chart ENC's, proposed strategy for production of large scale ENC's with private sector partners.

The reports were endorsed by the Commission.

7. IHO Work Programme 2008-2012

Following decision of including this item in the Agenda, the Commission decided to establish a Working Group, chaired by Mexico and formed by Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, UK, USA and Venezuela to draft a proposal to be sent to the IHB by 1st November.

8. Date and venue of the 8th MACHC Meeting

The 8th MACHC Meeting will be held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), possibly during the last week in September 2007. It was also decided to accept the invitation from the Hydrographer of Venezuela to hold the 9th Meeting in Caracas, in 2008.

9. Action List

The Commission approved a detailed Action List that will circulate with the Minutes of the Meeting.

10. Other activities.

a) A Seminar “International Maritime Organization Tools: Managing Ship Traffic to Ensure Environmentally Safe and Sound Navigation in the Gulf of Honduras” was organized during Friday 6 October, with several presentations.

NOTE: The complete Minutes of the meeting will be posted in the IHO Web site as soon as they became available from the Secretariat of MACHC.

List of Actions as a result of the VII Mesoamerican and Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC) Meeting:

- 1.- To complete the information on the MACHC Capacity Building Needs Table, with special attention to those needs that require economical support from the IHO Capacity Building Committee no later than October 20th. 2006. (Responsible: MACHC Chair).
- 2.- Conforming the MACHC Capacity Building Committee, Venezuela has accepted the Chairmanship and start contributions to the MACHC Working Plan. (Responsible: Venezuela).
- 3.- To elaborate the MACHC Working Plan. Small working group formed by: Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, United Kingdom, United States and Venezuela:
 - a.- To identify and to establish capacity building requirements in the region with impact on the IHO CBC budget.
 - b.- To send its corresponding tasks from each MS to identify those areas with impact to the IHO CBC budget no later than October 20th. 2006.
 - c.- To send our information to the IHB no later than November 1st. 2006.(Responsible: MACHC Chair).
- 4.- Amendments to the MACHC basic documents: Working Group formed by Cuba, Mexico, United States and Venezuela.
 - a.- MACHC Statutes: to include Brazil in the area coverage of the MACHC region.
 - b.- Revision of the Electronic Chart Committee ToR.
 - c.- Revision of the Capacity Building Committee ToR.(Responsible: Venezuela).
- 5.- Invitation to all Member States to inform to the MACHC Chair about the status of ratification of the amendments to the Convention of the IHO. (Responsible: MACHC Chair).
- 6.- To determine the Selection Procedure with respect to the MACHC representation at the IHO Council. (Responsible: All Member States to give to the MACHC Chair their input with respect to the proposal made at the last meeting).
- 7.- To analyze the Proposal about the definition of Hydrographic Interests made by Brazil and Mexico and the possibility of support to this proposal so it can be presented at the International Hydrographic Conference next year in Monaco. (Responsible: All Member States to give their input with respect to the proposal to the MACHC Chair).
- 8.- To start talking and coordination to produce the INT 4022 cell between France and Venezuela. (Responsible: France and Venezuela).
- 9.- Proposal with respect to the change of Usage Band of cells 1:1 000 000 scale from "General" to "Overview" to avoid overlaps with ENC cells of 1:500 000 scale. (Responsible: All Member States to send their comments and suggestions to the ECC Vicechair).
- 10.- Proposal with respect to a new scheme for INT cells of 1:500 000 scale that allow a more efficient and comprehensive distribution. (Responsible: ECC Vicechair).