

IHO Regional Hydrographic Commission for the ROPME Sea Area First Meeting , Iran, 7-10th October 2000

(First Draft Report)

Introduction:

In accordance with Resolution T1.3 of the International Hydrographic Organization, the first conference of IHO to establish the regional commission of ROPME Sea Area was held from 7 to 10th October, 2000 in Tehran hosted by the Ports and Shipping Organization (PSO) of the Islamic Republic of Iran and with the co-ordination of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME). The main objective of the Conference was to review and approve the commission Statutes and the related documents.

The Conference was opened by His Excellency Mr. M. Hojatti, Minister of Roads and Transportation of Iran followed by the speech of Commodore John Leech, Director of IHB, and Dr. Hassan Mohammadi, Acting Co-ordinator of ROPME, on 7th October 2000 with full radio, television and press coverage.

Attendance :

The Conference was attended by delegates from ROPME Sea Area States as follows: Bahrain, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and U.A.E. The delegates from Pakistan, U.K. and Canada attended as observers. The MENAS company also attended as an observer. The U.A.E. delegates have left the Conference at the first day of the Meeting. The list of participants and their address is attached as **Annex 1** of this report .

Preliminary Items

1. Opening remarks

The Conference opened at 09:30 A.M on Saturday, 7^h Oct 2000, with the speech of His Excellency Mr. M. Hojatti, Minister of Roads and Transportation of I.R of Iran. During his speech, he acknowledged that the ROPME Sea Area in which the establishment of hydrographic regional commission will be decided during the Conference, is one of the most important areas and waterways in which about 12,000 ocean-going vessels ply only from Hormuz Strait every year and about 14 million barrels of oil are being exported by oil tankers and product carriers from this region to other countries of the world every day.

He emphasized that the commission can have a close cooperation with other organizations and concerned experts in the field of conducting training courses and joint research in the region using technical science of International Hydrographic Organization and transmit the above-mentioned technical science to the countries of the region and plan to update nautical charts. The complete text of his speech is attached as **Annex 2** of this report.

The Director of IHB, Commodore John Leech mentioned, in his opening statement: “The trade in oil and manufactured goods is of the utmost importance to the wellbeing of the regional States. It is the task of hydrographic authorities to ensure that this trade continues without threat to life, property and environment, through the provision of the best possible services to navigation. Safe navigation prevents accidents and pollution.

However hydrographic data are not used only in the service of navigation. Increasingly they are an essential source of information for all manner of environmental management activities, and for ensuring the sustainable development of national maritime zones. It is a new but important task of hydrographic authorities to ensure that these data are conveniently available to scientists, engineers and government administrators for use in GIS applications.”

The complete text of his speech is attached as **Annex 3** of this report.

Dr. Mohammadi, Acting Co-ordinator of ROPME, expressed on behalf of H.E. Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Awadi, Executive Secretary of ROPME, in his statement, “The tasks are massive and despite some achievements at the national and regional levels, the extent of prevailing pollution and environmental degradation are still of deep concern and requires a concerted regional/international response. We are currently faced with major environmental challenges and need to come up with innovative response to deal with these challenges. Needless to say, the contribution of hydrography and marine charting in prevention and mitigation of accidental pollution and for better protection of the marine environment is notable and highly supportive”. The whole text of his speech is attached as **Annex 4** of this report.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Meeting discussed and adopted the provisional Agenda without any changes. List of approved agenda items is attached as **Annex 5**.

3. Election of the Chairman

On the basis of IHO procedures, it is customary to elect the chairman from the host country; therefore, Commodore John Leech nominated Mr. M.R. Ghaderi, Director General of Maritime Affairs of Ports and Shipping Organization of I.R. Iran as the chairman.

Mr. M.R. Ghaderi was unanimously approved by the delegates of participant States. He welcomed the distinguished participating States, ROPME and IHO and appreciated their co-operation for convening this important meeting .

In parts of his statement he emphasized “The ROPME Sea Area is considered as one of the regions in the world in which a significant number of vessels are plying and transporting passengers and cargoes.

The objectives of the conference could be achieved by providing and the approval of statutes and convening the regional commission and issuing maritime safety information and establishing maritime traffic control systems which have an important role in improvement of navigational safety and prevention of marine pollution.” The whole text of his speech is attached as **Annex 6**.

Items for Decision

4. Adoption of the Statues of the Commission

The draft Statutes of the Commission which was provided according to the statutes of other regional commissions had been distributed among all participant States before the opening of the conference and was considered during the meeting. The text of Statues which was approved is attached as **Annex 7** of this report.

5. Development of an INT chart scheme for the ROPME Sea Area

The draft International chart scheme for the ROPME Sea Area which was originally prepared by co-ordinator of INT area J “India” in 1990s, was discussed during the meeting. the necessary changes pertaining to the listed chart boundaries and other subjects were incorporated in an updated version which was distributed among the delegates. The amended document was presented by the U.K. delegation. The proposed paper is attached as **Annex 8** of this report. Then IHB representative asked the member states to study the document and return it to IHO with the related comments within two months .

The representative of Bahrain also distributed an Index which shows some revisions about the INT Charts. This Index is attached as **Annex 9** of this report.

It was also decided that sub region J2 should only cover the areas shown in the related graphs and should not be extended to red sea sub region .

Omani delegation proposal on the incorporation and adoption of a resolution with respect to the establishment of an international chart sub region J-2 and appointment of a co-ordinator for this sub region, was approved by the conference. The resolution for establishment of a sub region J2 is attached as **Annex 10** of this report.

Items for Discussion

6. Exchange of information through national reports

Countries participating in the conference presented their national reports during the meeting and discussed in more details by representatives. The outline of national reports of some participating countries is as follows:

BAHRAIN: The Hydrographic section of the State of Bahrain comes under the responsibility of the survey directorate of the Ministry of Housing, Municipality and Environment, as well as the responsibilities of, cadastral, topographic and geodetic surveying for this State . The section is proud to be the first organization in the Gulf Area to produce 4 “INT” charts within the Country’s waters.

Islamic Republic of Iran: The national report of the Islamic Republic of Iran started with brief information on the extent of its coastline and the importance of sea borne trade for its economy. Then it went on to explain the different organizations that are responsible for hydrographic surveying and nautical chart production in the Country. The report provided a table showing the nautical charts that have been published in the last twenty years.

It also reported on the ongoing activities to prepare charts in digital format. It then went on to describe future projects and, at the end, it touched upon a list of subjects that the Islamic Republic of Iran is willing and ready to carry out with the cooperation of the ROPME member States.

KUWAIT : Kuwait hydrographic office is under Ministry of Communications / Transport Sector. Its main activities include hydrographic surveys by qualified contractors, chart updating and promulgating notice to mariners. 11 nautical charts covering most of Kuwaiti waters were published in 1999 among which 7 were released. These charts were digitally formatted. Future plans of the office includes training of staff in charts updating with modern software.

QATAR: The Hydrographic Unit is responsible for delineation of territorial water limits of the State of Qatar as mandated by law. It provides weekly and monthly tidal forecast charts. It also defines benchmarks for high and low water tide levels. It also gathers seabed elevations purposely for planning and other related use. Currently the unit has a workforce of 2 groups of qualified hydrographic surveyors.

Saudi Arabia: In the Kingdom, there are various organizations which co-operate in the field of Hydrography such as:

- Meteorology & Environment Protection Authority (MEPA)
- Saudi Ports Authority .
- Saudi University
- Oil Company (ARAMCO)

Training :

Saudi Hydrography gets their training needs in – Taiwan – USA – UK

Red Sea Charts: Since 1985, different scales of charts have been produced for the coast of Saudi Arabia Kingdom and update of new sea port in DUBA & Chart No 27 Farsan Islands .

For the eastern Coast of the Kingdom no charts have been produced, in this part we are depending on NIMA Admiralty charts.

PAKISTAN : Pakistan Hydrographic Department was established in 1960. It has four components: A Hydrographic Department at Karachi and Islamabad, a Survey Vessel “BEHR PAIMA” and a Hydrographic School . HPN is responsible for all hydrographic activities in Pakistan. The department has published the latest charts for the entire coast of Pakistan based on the data collected by the ship during the last 15 years, using modern means. PN Hydrographic School conducts all courses for survey technicians and basic courses for officers. The Hydrographic Department is a well established organization .

U.K. : The UKHO maintains strong links with the ROPME Sea Area . It provides the mariners with a worldwide coverage of charts and nautical publications as well as ARCS and ENC’s in certain areas. It has also developed capabilities in GMDSS, multi-beam data processing, and a digital NM service. The UKHO has now signed bilateral arrangements with over 50% of the IHO Member States and is pursuing negotiations with a number of countries in the ROPME Sea Area.

The complete national reports of countries are attached as **Annex 11** of this report.

7. Regional arrangements for promulgating Maritime safety information (MSI)

One of the main activities of a hydrographic department is promulgating of navigational warnings. In this regard representative of United Kingdom, a permanent member of the IMO committee COMSAR, which is responsible for the development and implementation of MSI service worldwide, presented a brief paper during the Meeting. This paper consisted of two parts, the first, covered the provision of MSI within the GMDSS and the second, covered a report on the MSI Workshop, which was held in Muscat, Oman last February. The complete paper is attached as **Annex 12** of this report.

This report was followed by another short paper from the regional NAVAREA co-ordinator, Pakistan, concerning the promulgation of MSI in NAVAREA IX. The complete paper is attached as **Annex 13** of this report.

8. Future arrangements for provision of electronic navigation services

Under the WEND principles the IHO suggests that its Member States combine together to provide ENC services on a regional basis. For such a service, we need to have the ability to produce ENCs for the national waters, and have the ability to distribute them. IHB presented a report concerning the ENC production around the world. Statistics of ENC production were presented, together with a brief description of ENC distribution, including the concept of “consolidated” RENC and “Virtual” RENC.

The “SHARED” project in East Asia was also described. The report was supported by three papers. IHB emphasized the fact that ENC distribution, including updates, is the most important aspect of transition to digital charting. All the supporting papers are attached as **Annex 14** of this report.

9. Involvement of HO s in development of vessel traffic services in the region

There is a worldwide tendency for national maritime administrations to exert greater control over maritime traffic for the benefit of marine safety. this is being achieved through the introduction of Vessel Traffic Management and Information Services (VTMIS). Good understanding of the hydrography in the area of interest is a necessary prerequisite to this.

The main purpose of this item is to identify any national VTS in the region, and to provide an opportunity for discussion of the hydrographic implications of such schemes. A major scheme in the Red Sea was described by one of the U.K. delegates. This paper was named ‘PERSGA Project’ which is as **Annex 15** of this report.

10. GIS requirements and applications for hydrographic data

The IHO identified GIS applications of hydrographic data as an important new service obligation of national hydrographic offices, by presenting an Information Paper on 2nd Extraordinary IH Conference, is attached as **Annex 16** of this paper. Then, IHB asked Qatar to introduce its national GIS to the meeting. Qatar as the first country in the world to develop a fully integrated geospatial data infrastructure, presented a paper on this subject. The paper, introduces a large decentralized collection of databases of sixteen government agencies which are shared and maintained through a country-wide high-speed fiber optic network which is called GISnet., and describes that the public can make use of this huge amount of data by being able to gain access some of it through the Internet. This paper is attached as **Annex 17** of this paper.

Also an opportunity was given to Iran to explain the GIS activities in National Cartographic Center(NCC) of Iran. This paper is attached as **Annex 18** of this paper.

11. **Regional co-operation in surveying and chart production**

Surveying and Chart Production facilities are very expensive items. Sometimes it is cost effective to arrange to pool resources to achieve working on a co-operative basis. In this regard representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has offered a suggestion for co-operation between Iran and regional States in the future.

12. **Training**

Education and training in Cartography and Surveying are particularly important in maintaining the skill base in all IHO Member States. In this regard IHB had submitted to the Meeting an introductory Note which is attached as **Annex 19** of this paper. Also another paper was introduced at the Meeting by IHB, this paper was about details of international training courses which were taking place regularly in Italy, Japan and India. This paper offers different courses at International Maritime Academy (Trieste, Italy), such as:

Hydrography, Hydrographic Data Management, Harbour and Coastal Surveyors and Nautical Cartography.

Also a Group Training course in hydrographic survey and Coastal Oceanography and Data Processing at Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA). The paper is attached as **Annex 20** of this paper.

13. **Translation of IHO technical publications into Arabic**

Language is a very important issue in the development of hydrography around the world. Delegation from Oman had stated that in the last workshop which was held in the Sultanate of Oman from 20 till 22nd of February 2000, all the documents presented at that meeting was in two languages(Arabic and English), which was very interesting and useful for most of the participants. Also IHB noted that some works have been done on the translation of hydrographic materials into Arabic. Due care should be considered in the translation of technical translation . Saudi Arabia's delegate stressed on the importance of cooperation in this regard.

14. **IHO Strategic Directions, and regional representation at SPWG**

The Commission very briefly went through the IHO strategic plan and work programme which was circulated at the conference. The representative from IHB was leading this discussion. The Commission should have nominated a regional representative to the IHO Strategic Planning Working Group(SPWG), but because of some obstacles and possible related expenses, was decided that the regional representative to correspond with SPWG rather than participating at their meetings.

Closing Items

15. **Other Business**

Under this Agenda Item nothing was presented.

16. **Record and Decisions of Meeting**

The draft summary of the meeting was provided , but because of lack of time, was decided to complete the report and send the draft final report to IHB within one month. IHB will go through the draft final report of the meeting and possibly make some minor correction and will make it a Final Report, then distribute it to participating delegates.

17. **Next Meeting**

Pakistan suggested to be the next host of the meeting, but since it is not part of ROPME regional States and was participating at the first meeting as an observer, its suggestion was denied by other Member States.

On the other hand Sultanate of Oman asked the meeting to discuss this matter with its authorities and let IHB knows within a month.

The time of the second regional hydrographic meeting was set for October 2002, and the duration of it will be 3 days.

18. Closing Remarks

First Meeting of IHO Regional Hydrographic Commission for the ROPME Sea Area came to its conclusion by statements from the Chairman, IHO, ROPME and the host country. At this ceremony some small gifts was awarded to the participants. The work of the Conference was finished at 1730 on 10th of October 2000.

Annexes

- Annex 1: List of Participants
- Annex 2: The Speech of Minister of Roads and Transportation, I.R. Iran
- Annex 3: The Speech of Director of IHB
- Annex 4: The Speech of Executive Secretary of ROPME
- Annex 5: List of approved agenda items
- Annex 6: The Speech of the Chairman
- Annex 7: The text of approved RSAHC Statutes
- Annex 8: Proposed list of INT Charts in the ROPME Sea Area
- Annex 9: Revision from Bahrain about INT Charts
- Annex 10: The resolution for establishment of a sub region J-2
- Annex 11: The complete national reports of participating States
- Annex 12: Provision of MSI within the GMDSS & report on the MSI workshop
- Annex 13: Promulgation of MSI in NAVAREA IX
- Annex 14: Papers on ENC, report of 5th IHO–WEND committee, SHARED program
- Annex 15: Paper on PERSGA Project
- Annex 16: Report of 2nd extraordinary IH Conference
- Annex 17: GIS on Qatar and the Center for GIS
- Annex 18: GIS activities in National Cartographic Center (NCC) of I.R. Iran
- Annex 19: Introductory Note
- Annex 20: Paper on training courses (Trieste, JICA, India)

Note: Annexes which are available in electronic copies: 1- 2- 5- 6- 7- 10- part of 11- 17- 18
 Annexes which are available in hard copies: 3- 4- 8- 9- part of 11- 12- 13- 14- 15- 16- 19- 20