

3rd MEETING
ROPME SEA AREA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION
IHB, MONACO 08/09 JUNE 2009

IHB DIRECTOR STATEMENT
By Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA

Chairman of the ROPME Sea Area Hydrographic Commission,
Members, Associated Members and Observers of the RSAHC,
Gentlemen

It is a great honour for me, on behalf of the International Hydrographic Bureau, to address a few words on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the 3rd Conference of the RSAHC.

The International Hydrographic Organization gives great importance to the work of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions and the IHB Directors have under their responsibilities, the task to facilitate and provide support to the Commissions aiming at implementing the decisions agreed at their Conferences.

The IHO has 14 RHCs. All have been established: to promote technical cooperation in the domain of hydrographic surveying, marine cartography and nautical information; to stimulate countries in the region to establish and strengthen their hydrographic capabilities and to facilitate the exchange of information.

As you can imagine the 14 RHCs have different challenges and priorities. The RSAHC is one of the RHCs in strong need to improve the capabilities to provide hydro-cartographic and safety to navigation information, products and services, and therefore, this conference shall be seen as an excellent opportunity to work with a regional technical team spirit.

The IHO has made substantial efforts to motivate both, governmental authorities and maritime and port authorities on the transcendental role hydrography and its related disciplines play in national sustainable development. The maritime transport sector, the fishing industry, the tourism activities, the maritime delimitation issues, defense, coastal zone management, ports, just to mention a few areas, all of great socio-economic significance cannot be effective and efficiently developed if reliable and updated hydrographic information is not available. There is not one activity that takes place in the sea that do not benefit from hydrography.

The IHO, through the IHB has paid visit to several countries in the RSAHC to assess the hydrographic capabilities aiming at providing advice on the way that existing shortcomings could be faced. After each visit the IHB has offered each country with a frank, technical and responsible report, describing the national arrangements in place, offering some conclusions and recommendations that if implemented could improve national, regional and international responsibilities internationally agree, such as SOLAS, Chapter 5 Regulation 9, related to Hydrographic Services.

In conjunction with these visits and also contributing to raise awareness on the importance of hydrography and the need to establish national structures that would foster initiatives at both, national and regional levels, several training initiatives have been identified, unfortunately these activities have not been implemented.

The IHB expects that this situation will be discussed during this conference aiming at finding an agreement that could be acceptable to all the members of the Commission.

This Conference offers the opportunity to make some reflections on where we stand. Has the RSAHC made some progress? What problems still exist? Which are the priorities? How can the RSAHC achieve a viable progress in improving safety to navigation in the region? Are RSAHC Members ready to identify common targets and assume collectively commitments to move forward? From the IHB side we are particularly interested in learning about the agreements you will reach at this Conference. Mr Chairman and Members of the Commission we wish you a successful conference. The IHB is ready and willing to contribute to the Commission's efforts.

Gentlemen,

Thank you very much.