



6th ROPME SEA AREA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION CONFERENCE

**Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
9 – 11 February 2015**

IHB Report

Status of Approval of Amendments to the IHO Convention

1. Amendments to the Convention on the IHO were approved by the 3rd Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference in May 2005. By February 2015, 42 of the required 48 approvals to the Protocol of Amendments had been received by the Government of Monaco. The following IHO Member States of the RSAHC have not yet indicated positive support for the Protocol of Amendments: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and the UAE.
2. The amendments to the Convention will enter force three months after the necessary majority of approvals is received by the Government of Monaco. If the required number of approvals is received in the next two years, then the first Assembly of the IHO will be held in 2017.
3. The Directing Committee, in cooperation with the Department of External Relations of the Government of Monaco, stands ready to assist, through diplomatic or other channels, those States' representatives that may be encountering difficulties in progressing the outstanding approvals of the Amendments to the Convention.

Status of Approval of New Member States of the IHO

4. IHO membership now stands at 82. Bulgaria, Haiti, Mauritania and Sierra Leone to be accepted as a Member State of the IHO. Recently Brunei Darussalam, Georgia and Viet Nam have all also received the required number of votes. However, the Government of Monaco has yet to receive their instruments of accession from these countries which will formalise their membership.

Regional Applications for Membership of the IHO

5. Iraq that is the Associate member of the RSAHC and also not already Member State of the IHO is encouraged to become member. The Directing Committee, in cooperation with the Department of External Relations of the Government of Monaco, stands ready to assist, through diplomatic or other channels, for Iraq's application for membership of the IHO through their respective governments.

Suspended Member States

6. Serbia, Congo and the Dominican Republic remain suspended. IHB is working with these states to expedite their return to full membership as soon as

possible, as is the case for a number of other Member States who have fallen behind on payments of their annual subscription.

INT Chart and ENC Production Coordination – Region I

7. Islamic Republic of Iran, as Chair of the RSAHC Integrated Charting Committee Working Group (ICCWG) for Region I, has continued to provide regular updates to S-11 Part B - Catalogue of INT Charts. According to records held by the IHB, in total, 56 INT charts have been published to date, out of 62 charts in the scheme (90.3 %). I would encourage member states to continue to support the IR of Iran, as INT coordinator, in providing the IHB with regular updates to S-11.

8. All RSAHC region Member States are also invited to provide the IHB with regular updates to C-55 on at least an annual basis. The IHB would be grateful for delegates to forward up-dated information to the IHB at info@iho.int or via mail.

5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC5)

9. EIHC5 took place from 6 to 10 October in the Auditorium Rainier III in Monaco. 65 of the 82 Member States were represented, together with 2 pending Member States and 21 representatives from non-Member States. The RSAHC was represented by IR of Iran, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

10. The Conference acknowledged the need to consider novel ways to supplement hydrographic data gathering, especially in remote and unsurveyed areas. Methods include using satellite derived bathymetry and crowd-sourcing techniques. The Conference was told that the development of national and regional spatial data infrastructures is growing and that national hydrographic services should urgently consider the potential impact on their roles and responsibilities as the world moves from a map and chart-based paradigm to one that places the management and provision of national reference geodata services ahead of map and chart production.

11. The Proceedings of the Conference will be published on the web.

12. In addition to the Industry Exhibition, an IHO Capacity Building exhibition and poster celebration of ten years of Nippon Foundation IHO-IOC GEBCO scholars was arranged. A number of past scholars and alumni provided poster displays of their work since graduation throughout the period of the Conference.

Capacity Building Programme

12. CB Plans for 2014 was completed more than 80% execution of the original plan. There are relatively increasing number of events in the RSAHC recent years and we hope to see more involvement from the region in CB activities.

13. The call for nominations for the 2015/2016 course Category A Hydrography Programme at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM), sponsored by the Republic of Korea was announced in Circular Letter 65/2014 and the call for

nominations for the 2015 course of the CHART Project (Category B Cartography Course at UKHO), sponsored by the Nippon Foundation was announced in Circular Letter 10/2015.

14. Most Cat A and Cat B training opportunities require proven proficiency in English language. As a result, many applicants are rejected due to a lack of this proficiency. Hydrographic Offices are encouraged to select and prepare suitable candidates for future training opportunities, especially for the Category A course at USM, where a TOEFL/IELTS certificate is required, together with a GRE score.

IHB GIS and Databases

15. The IHB is evaluating an Esri-based GIS solution. It is anticipated that the C-55, Year Book and other associated databases will be transferred to an Esri environment by April 2015. This will enable access to various layers of information through the IHO website and through various sophisticated cloud-based on-line GIS options.

Post-2015 Agendas

16. The development of the post-2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction under the aegis of the United Nations offer an opportunity to highlight the fundamental role of hydrography in underpinning sustainable development and the reduction of marine disaster risks. The Directing Committee is striving to make the best of this opportunity, both directly and through related initiatives and programmes such as the UN initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) and the activities of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO). As the negotiation processes are driven and controlled by Member States, the efforts of the Directing Committee need to be taken forward at the national and regional levels (IHO CL 53/2014 refers).

International Hydrographic Review

17. International Hydrographic Review. The IHR provides an opportunity for Member States to publicise technical and other achievements in the region. An editorial board comprising a representative from each region has been established. The representative for the RSAHC region is Mr Keith Brown (Oman).

18. Papers for consideration for publication in the IHR should be forwarded directly to the IHB (ihreview@iho.int) with a copy to the Editor (ian.halls1@defence.au.gov).

IHO Publicity

19. World Hydrography Day. The theme for World hydrography Day 2015 is “*Our seas and waterways - yet to be fully charted and explored*” will concentrate on the fact that much of the world’s seas, oceans and navigable waters remain unsurveyed. The purpose of this theme is to provide Member States with the opportunity to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of hydrography. The

theme also provides the opportunity to promote and encourage innovative supplementary data gathering initiatives to address the current shortfall in useful bathymetric data, including crowd-sourcing and satellite derived bathymetry that were discussed at the 5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference in October 2014. The theme also offers the opportunity to highlight both the missed opportunities and the potential risks involved in the continuing development of the *blue economy* and all other human-related activities taking place at sea, at a time when mankind still has a relatively limited knowledge of the nature and the shape of much of the seafloor and the hazards that lie upon it.

20. Member States are invited to forward as soon as possible to the IHB any material that is created in support of national WHD-2015 celebrations for posting on the IHO website. This will enable the widest possible dissemination of publicity and support material for the event. The IHB will be providing some supporting material on the IHO website.

Action Requested of RSAHC Member States

21. RSAHC Member States are invited to:
- **Note** this report;
 - **Report** in-country progress on voting the Protocol of Amendments to the IHO Convention, including any difficulties being encountered or IHB assistance required;
 - **Continue to provide** updates to S-11, through IR of Iran as coordinator for INT Region I;
 - **Provide** updates to C-55 as appropriate; and
 - **Take any other actions** as considered appropriate.