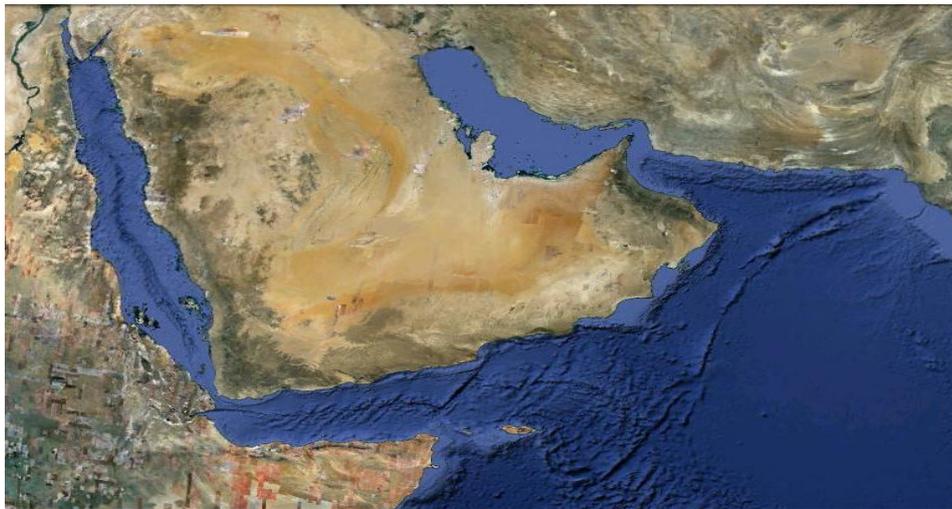




**7th ROPME SEA AREA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(RSAHC 7)**



MUSCAT, OMAN

20-22 FEBRUARY 2017

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FINAL REPORT

7th MEETING OF THE ROPME SEA AREA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (RSAHC7)

**20 to 22 February 2017
Muscat – Sultanate of Oman**

*Note: All RSAHC7 Reference Documents are available at IHO website:
http://iho.int/mtg_docs/rhc/RSAHC/RSAHC7/RSAHC7.htm*

Opening ceremony of the seventh meeting of the ROPME Sea Area Hydrographic Commission (RSAHC) commenced on Monday, 20th February 2017 under the auspices of Commodore Rashid bin Harib al Rahbi, Director General, Operations and Plans of the Royal Navy of Oman. Meeting was sponsored by the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

AGENDA FOR RSAHC 7 MEETING

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHIEF GUEST AND DIRECTOR IHO

1. Commodore Rashid bin Harib al Rahbi, Director General, Operations and Plans, Royal Navy of Oman, addressed the meeting and welcomed the participants. His address was followed by speech from Rear Admiral (Retd) Mustafa Iptes, Director International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). Following aspects were highlighted by Director IHO:

- a. IHO Convention has changed leading to formulation of Assembly, IHO Council and IHO Secretariat.
- b. Elections for the post of IHO Secretary General and 02 x Directors will be held during 1st IHO Assembly session scheduled in Monaco from 24 – 28 Apr 17.
- c. IHO Council would be the main body between IHO Assembly and member states. IHO council comprises of total 30 seats out of which 10 seats are allocated on the basis of tonnage table while remaining 20 seats have been

distributed amongst the RHCs. As such through this arrangement RSAHC has 02 x seats in IHO Council.

d. All matter pertaining to hydrography, cartography, standards & regulations, finance, admin, industry etc will be decided by the IHO council.

e. All incumbents including Secretary General, Directors and IHO Council members will be elected for a period of 6 years. Similarly, the planning and finance cycle of IHO is also set as 3 years.

f. Under new convention, RHCs will have greater influence and role in the IHO activities. Therefore, member states were urged to participate more actively in regional as well as IHO level activities.

PARTICIPANT OF THE MEETING

2. Member States Bahrain (BHR), IR of Iran (IRN), Oman (OMN), Pakistan (PAK), Qatar (QAT) and Saudi Arabia (SAU), associate members France (FRA), UK (GBR) and USA with representatives from DG Met Oman, MENAS, Skill trade, Primar, IIC Technologies, Vasans Consultancy, Fugro LADS, Teledyne CARIS, IALA and IHO Secretariat were presents.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

3. Agenda and programme were approved.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (RSAHC6)

4. Meeting reviewed the List of Action items from RSAHC6 and concluded the following:

a. Director IHO informed that after retirement of Dr Col Adel of UAE the office of RSAHC Chair became inactive and pursuance / coordination with respect to action points was generally lacking. Further, it was also noted that member states i.e UAE and Kuwait were not present in the meeting.

- b. Keeping in view the status, majority of outstanding actions were included in the agenda and it was agreed they would be discussed in the meeting.
- c. Pakistan noted that actions list mentioning for all is too generic and it was suggested that there should be a coordinator to monitor and lead the action in preparation for the next meeting.
- d. USA noted that a new country report format had been developed, which may be included in the RSAHC statutes as the standard format for future meetings. It was felt that this could overcome the lack of input or activity on some items.
- e. IR of Iran, Pakistan, Oman and Saudi Arabia discussed INT chart issues pertaining to limits/overlap and new series. It was decided that issues would be discussed in detail during the side meeting for INT Chart Coordination on 21 Feb 17.

REVIEW OF STATUES OF THE COMMISSION

5. Review of the Statutes of the Commission including status of suspended members and process for their re-admittance to RSAHC was deliberated. It was noted that there are no suspended members. IHO informed that Iraq was working towards full membership and IHO Secretariat would continue to assist them.

6. Assistant Director IHO noted that in past few years it has been observed that member states of RSAHC have limited participation in regional hydrographic activities. Also willingness and capacity to take responsibilities such as Chair and Vice-Chair appear limited to a few member states, which is a point of concern at international level. He indicated that a merger between RSAHC and NIOHC could strengthen the regional activities and engagement, noting the regions is adjacent and a few states (i.e Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) are already member of both RHCs.

7. Pakistan opposed the idea and highlighted that in view of the maritime importance of Gulf and North Arabian Sea area; direct representation of regional states on international level is paramount to develop hydrographic / cartographic capacity in the regions as well as to facilitate safety of shipping through exclusive attention. Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia also supported the existence of RSAHC as it is a matter of regional states identity. Thereafter, the matter was held in abeyance till completion of further proceedings of meetings.

NOMINATION ON IHO COUNCIL SEATS ALLOCATED TO RSAHC

8. Director IHO informed the house that there were 2 seats allocated to the RSAHC on the IHO Council. IHO Council would be established at the 1st session of the IHO Assembly to be held in Monaco, 24-28 April. He noted that chair of the RSAHC is required to forward nominations of 02 MS who would be occupying the IHO Council seats (2017-2020) to the Secretary General IHO by 27 April 17, the day before the end of the Assembly.

9. IHO noted that RSAHC is required to decide how to select their representatives, either by election or by appointment, and that the method needs to be included in the statutes. IHO highlighted the potential role and importance of the Council within the structure of the IHO. It was informed that some RHCs had already notified the IHO of their representatives. Acting Chair (Oman) suggested that a side meeting should be arranged to discuss the issue and decide how the process should be agreed for the future. Pakistan was requested to lead the side meeting to discuss the issue and present a proposal.

10. On 21 Feb 17, Pakistan presented a proposal during the side meeting attended by members and associate members. Major contours of the proposal were as under:

- a. Chair and Vice-Chair (RSAHC) are elected for 02 years, while IHO Council seats are allocated for 03 years.
- b. IHO Council seats may be occupied by the elected Chair and Vice-Chair by default. The same would eliminate the need of separate elections or

nomination process for IHO council seats, thus simplifying the procedure, saving time, and bringing clarity as to who would be next in line for IHO council seat.

c. Chair would relinquish seat after completing 02 years term and Vice-Chair would automatically be promoted as Chair, Thus, ensuring continuity at regional as well as IHO level. Secondly in effect only New Vice-Chair would be elected every 02 years, thus minimizing the efforts and time involved in the election / nomination process.

d. Member States who have not been Chair or Vice-Chair in past will be given priority. Secondly, sequential list as per willingness of states will be maintained to ensure all member states get chance and to encourage engagement / participation.

11. Members held detailed deliberations on the proposal and thereafter, it was agreed by all and approved. Additionally, USA highlighted the need to include a new standing agenda item covering those issues and topics to be presented at the IHO Council by the Commission representatives, which was also agreed by all states. Accordingly, the statute of RSAHC were amended and updated on the RSAHC webpage.

REPORT BY IHO

12. IHO provided a comprehensive summary of activities since the RSAHC6 meeting held in Abu Dhabi in 2015. It was noted that there had been no representation at the 8th Inter Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) meeting held at Abu Dhabi, UAE, 29-31 May 2016 for which IHO Secretariat had to generate the report on behalf of RSAHC. IHO urged all MS to provide regular updates to C-55 – Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide and P-5 – IHO Yearbook, which it was recommended should be reviewed at least once per year.

13. Member States were encouraged to support and contribute data towards the General Bathymetric Chart of the Ocean (GEBCO), Shallow Water Bathymetry initiative to extend the coverage inside the 200 meter contour.

14. Brief details of the IHO Capacity Building Programme were provided along with anticipated funding available for the next 3 years programmes. Member States were encouraged to engage industry, which is willing and keen to become involved in regional Capacity Building activities and initiatives.

NATIONAL REPORTS

15. Bahrain, France, IR of Iran, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UK and USA presented their National Reports. Kuwait and UAE did not attend the meeting neither submitted national report.

16. The following highlights and requests for clarification were noted:

a. Bahrain highlighted that they are actively engaged in hydrographic surveying of their areas through own resources and with USA assistance. Importantly they are utilizing LIDAR capability for mapping the sea-shore interface and surveying shallow waters. Bahrain is publishing their ENCs and maintaining INT chart series.

b. France highlighted that survey works are being conducted according to the prioritized 4 years survey plan for all the waters under French jurisdiction. Deployment of the French hydrographic ship BEAUTEMPS-BEAUPRÉ in the Indian Ocean is scheduled for 2017, including a 3 months period of work within the RSAHC region.

c. IR of Iran highlighted main contents of its report, particularly assets, charts and nautical publications. It was noted that Iran has 4 large survey vessels and multiple medium/small size platforms for undertaking hydrographic surveys. Iran maintains large inventory of nautical charts and ENCs covering Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and Caspian Sea.

d. Oman briefed on the hydrographic and cartographic capabilities along with organizational structure. It was noted that Oman has limited survey assets

(presently one ship), however, they have plans to acquire new ships. At the international level Oman participates in number of IHO working group.

e. Pakistan highlighted current hydrographic survey and cartographic status. It was noted that Pakistan has well surveyed / maintained paper and ENC charts for coastal areas (less than 200m). Systematic survey coverage in deeper water is gradually being expanded and with the induction of new survey vessel the efforts would be supplemented. International Board on Standards of Competence for Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers (IBSC) has recently renewed the accreditation of Cat B hydrographic course for 06 years, which would contribute in regional capacity building.

f. Qatar maintains a small hydrographic unit under the Ministry of Municipality. Hydrographic Unit does not produce any form of nautical charts. The United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) is providing nautical charting for the waters of Qatar.

g. Saudi Arabia briefed on activities of the General Commission for Survey (GCS), including surveys undertaken and charts being produced. It was noted that Survey Vessel *SULTAN* is actively engaged in hydrographic surveys in Red Sea, while Hydrographic Survey Launch (HSL) is undertaking surveys in Gulf. Accordingly, number of PNCs and ENCs have been produced and planned to be included in INT chart series.

h. UK highlighted hydrographic activities and INT charts/ENC production status along with capacity building courses offered to various developing countries. UKHO is very active within the RSAHC region, they have produced total of 55 new editions and 1 new chart since 2015.

j. USA highlighted the MSI, hydrographic and charting activities undertaken in the region specially LIDAR surveys carried out in support of Bahrain hydrographic office. USA urged member states to contribute bathymetric data towards international charting initiatives such as GEBCO and IHO.

REVIEW OF STATUS OF HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEYING AND NAUTICAL CHARTING IN RSAHC REGION (IHO PUBLICATION C-55)

17. All RSAHC MS were reminded of the necessity to review their C-55 and IHO Yearbook (P-5) entries annually to ensure the information remains current. It was noted that information contained in the National Reports would be checked against the current information and any changes would be noted. However, it was highlighted that, as the RSAHC does not meet every year, there was a need for MS to submit information in non-meeting years. It was also highlighted that currently no RSAHC member had requested login details for the INTtoGIS services, which is required to manage the national information contained in the database

REPORT BY INT CHART COORDINATOR – PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RSAHC INT CHART SCHEME AND OTHER ISSUE

18. IR Iran confirmed their willingness to continue in the role of INT Chart Region I coordinator with Mr Akbar Rostami taking on the position. It was agreed that Iran would review the list on new INT Charts provided by MS in their National Report and discuss the phased adoption in coordination with the UKHO. The action is to be confirmed by the RSAHC, by correspondence if appropriate, and confirmed to the IHO Secretariat.

19. With regards to issue of overlapping data in ENC's produced by regional countries the need to establish an agreeable solution was stressed upon. Pakistan mentioned that a detailed solution w.r.t INT 751 had been forward to Iran for further taking it up with area J INT Chart Coordinator. Pakistan also pointed out that WEND Principles have established guidelines on such matters, which should be adhered to.

20. MS were urged to obtain their ID and Password and to start revising their schemes using the INT GIS Service to allow the Regional Coordinator to approve the amendments and generate an updated version of the regional scheme. Participants were reminded to timely vote on related matters as circulated through IHO Circular Letters from time to time.

**WORLD ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION CHART DATABASE WORKING GROUP
(WEND WG) ISSUES BY UK AND REPORT BY ENC REGIONAL COORDINATOR
(IR OF IRAN)**

21. IHO provided a comprehensive brief on WENDWG issues and activities since the RSAHC6 meeting. Important issues discussed are:

- a. Steps should be taken by RHCs and ENC producers to address overlapping ENC coverage, particularly where it could impact on the safety of navigation.
- b. Draft of a new IHO Resolution seeking to limit overlapping ENC coverage issues aimed at clarifying and consolidating existing procedures as per WEND Principles will be submitted to IRCC9 in June 2017 for endorsement.
- c. Regional ENC Centres (RENCs) are required to establish procedures and guidelines for assessing the “significance” of any particular instance of overlapping ENC coverage, to develop further the possibility of exchanging ENC data between RENCs for harmonization purposes and quality control in general.
- d. With respect to RSAHC it was decided that Iran as the ENC Coordinator is required to report the status of the ENC regional scheme to the WENDWG secretary. Moreover, Iran is to review ENC overlaps greater than 5 miles and seek resolution with the relevant MS, reporting any action to the WENDWG secretary.

**DEVELOPMENT OF MARINE SPATIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE (MSDI) IN THE
REGION**

22. IHO highlighted the importance of establishing a national MSDI for coastal states as the uses of bathymetric data continue to expand into non-traditional areas. The approach of ‘survey once, use many times’ to maximise the cost effectiveness of

data gathering was also emphasized. IHO noted the need for HOs to consider their position as data management organizations rather than purely focused on product creation. IHO highlighted the increasing importance of geospatial data and the management of the data within national organizations and authorities to maximize the economic benefits which can be derived from the sharing of data and to avoid duplication of data gathering efforts and inappropriate use of resources. MSDI can be broken down into:

- a. Governance. Agree to share information between national and international organizations and authorities to improve modelling and risk management.
- b. Technology. Systems in place to use the data.
- c. Standards. Interoperability of data and systems to be able to use the data.
- d. Contents. What data and coverage is available, importance of metadata to support the data content, conduct a data audit – national, regional and international.

23. Availability of data and the cultural change within national organizations to freely share data was discussed enthusiastically amongst the participants. France highlighted that data is high value currency and its use needs to be maximized. The concern on usage of data can be mitigated by the type of data released and the associated metadata, which will inform the potential user whether it was suitable for their particular use. M/s Fugro highlighted the contents of the IHO MSDI web pages which contains useful guidance on MSDI and information on data and MDSI. USA highlighted the two RHCs which have developed regional MDSI portals; ARHC and MACHC.

PROMULGATION OF NAVIGATIONAL WARNINGS, MSI AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GMDSS IN NAVAREA IX

24. Pakistan provided a comprehensive update on NAVAREA IX and regional MSI provision, this included a brief of the new MSI management system and website. IHO highlighted modernization plan for the GMDSS, recognition of new mobile satellite service providers of the GMDSS and display of MSI on ECDIS.

25. IHO also highlighted the SOLAS obligation to provide timely MSI to the NAVAREA IX Coordinator and not to rely on commercial third parties. France noted that Djibouti information could be obtained with their help as primary charting authority. Pakistan urged the relevant charting authorities to play their role in establishing MSI related contacts with coastal states that are not in direct communication with NAVAREA IX coordinator.

PRESENTATIONS FROM INDUSTRY

26. The Commission received presentations from IALA, SevenCs, Skilltrade, Fugro, DG Met-Oman, IIC Technologies, Teledyne CARIS, PRIMAR, MENAS and Vasans Consultancy. Presentation on Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS) by DGMet generated considerable discussion on bathymetric resolution, provision of real-time tidal information and the need for shallow water bathymetry to support and underpin models for tsunami and storm surge inundation forecast.

CAPACITY BUILDING (CB) MATTERS

27. RSAHC CB Coordinator provided a brief and presentation on CB activities within the region. He discussed a provisional CB plan covering the next period 2018-2020; to which all MS agreed. He further elaborated that under new IHO Convention, only MS are eligible for Phase 2 and 3 activities, although all coastal states will continue to receive Phase 1 training and activities. He highlighted the need to look ahead for at least three years due to the meeting cycle of the RSAHC. IHO highlighted the increase in funding spent on CB from € 300,000 in 2012 to more than € 800,000 in 2016.

28. UK highlighted that the current Regional CB Coordinator was standing down and asked whether there were any volunteers. The Chair indicated that this would be completed by correspondence once clarity of the roles and responsibilities has been reviewed. IHO noted that the submissions needed to be received by the CBSC secretary by 1 April and that the Regional CB Coordinator should attend the CBSC meeting to represent the Commission.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

29. Iran showed willingness to become Chair, while Pakistan submitted nominations for Vice-Chair. However, on 21 Feb 17, Iran withdrew its nomination as Chair and put forward nomination for Vice Chair. Pakistan proposed that matter may be pended till 22 Feb 17 to give more time to member states to consult higher authorities back home to come to a conclusion.

30. On 22 Feb 17, session was held to elect Chair and Vice-Chair and thus by default 02 IHO council members from RSAHC. Pakistan informed the house that with approval of higher authorities, Pakistan would like to propose nomination for the Chair. The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes and when members reassembled, it was announced that now Pakistan is Chair and Iran is Vice-Chair. Thereafter, Pakistan assumed the seat of Chair and conducted further proceedings of the meeting.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

31. Chair mentioned that next meeting of RSAHC is tentatively scheduled in February 2019; exact date would be informed in due course of time. MENAS proposed to host next meeting subject to government approval, which would be communicated within 06 months by end of August 2017. Pakistan was mentioned as alternate option. Final date and venue would be declared by Chairman subject to necessary approvals by concerned governments.

CLOSING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

32. The Chairman asked delegates if there were any additional comments. The Chairman extended his thanks to Member States, Associate Members, commercial companies, organizations and all present for their inputs attendance and contributions to the meeting. He also thanked IHO Secretariat for their guidance and help during the meeting.

33. Director Iptes commented on the success of the meeting and congratulated all participants for their active participation. He particularly highlighted the methodology adopted by member states to elect Chair and Vice-chair as well as nomination of IHO council members from RSAHC. He bode success to all and wished them a very fruitful session till next meeting. Members supported these comments and thanked Oman for successfully hosting and managing the meeting and all the associated arrangements in the absence of Chair (UAE).

34. The Chairman formally closed the meeting, looking forward to welcoming all participants back for RSAHC 8 in 2019. At the end he wished all a safe return to their respective countries.

Annexes:

A. Full list of attendees (RSAHC7-Participants).

B. Actions List (RSAHC7-Actions).

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

7th ROPME SEA AREA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION MEETING (RSAHC7)

FROM 20 TO 22 FEBRUARY 2017 AT MUSCAT- OMAN

No.	Name	Organization	Country	E-mail contact
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8	Hamdan Al Yahmadi	Oman National Hydrographic Office	Oman	ONHO
9	Mohammed Al Farsi	Oman National Hydrographic Office	Oman	ONHO
10	Hazaa Al Mahthori	Oman National Hydrographic Office	Oman	ONHO
11	Muneer Al Bulushi	Oman National Hydrographic Office	Oman	ONHO
12	Amar Al Rahbi	Oman National Hydrographic Office	Oman	ONHO
13	Ahlam Al kharusi	Oman National Hydrographic Office	Oman	ONHO
14	Nasser Al Riyami	Oman National Hydrographic Office	Oman	ONHO
15	Nasser Al Shaabi	Oman National Hydrographic Office	Oman	ONHO
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ACTION LIST

7th ROPME SEA AREA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION MEETING (RSAHC7)

FROM 20 TO 22 FEBRUARY 2017 AT MUSCAT- OMAN

No	Action	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	A coordinator is to monitor and lead the action in preparation for the next meeting.	Chairman	Progressive
2.	New country report format is to be included in the RSAHC statutes as the standard format for future meetings.	IHO	30 Dec 17
3.	Assistance to be provided to Iraq towards becoming full member of IHO.	IHO	Progressive
4.	New standing agenda item covering those issues and topics to be presented at the IHO Council by the Commission representatives to be included in the meeting.	All	Progressive
5.	To inform IHO of any changes to data and ensure that information is published on the IHO website, C-55 and IHO Year Book P-5	All	Progressive
6.	Status of IHO website, C-55 and IHO Year Book is to be reviewed yearly	Chairman	On 30 December each year
7.	To consider provision of shallow water bathymetric data to IHO-IOC GEBCO programme through the IHO DCDB.	All	Progressive
8.	To contribute with articles and notes for International Hydrographic Review (IHR)	All	Progressive
9.	Election of Chair & Vice-Chair and nomination of IHO council members from the region is to be conducted as per the agreed proposal that has been reflected accordingly in RSAHC statutes	All	Progressive
10.	Member States are encouraged to engage with industry, which is willing and keen to become involved in regional Capacity Building activities and initiatives	All	Progressive

11.	To ensure personnel nominated for CB courses and workshops are correctly employed on completion.	All	Progressive
12.	List on new INT Charts provided by MS in their National Report is to be reviewed for phasewise adoption in coordination with the UKHO. The action is to be confirmed by the RSAHC, by correspondence if appropriate, and confirmed to the IHO Secretariat.	INT Chart Coordinator Region I	15 Feb 18
13.	MS are to obtain their ID and Password and to start revising their schemes using the INTToGIS Service to allow the Regional Coordinator to approve the amendments and generate an updated version of the regional scheme	All	30 Dec 17
14.	ENC Coordinator is required to report the status of the ENC regional scheme to the WENDWG secretary. Moreover, Iran is to review ENC overlaps greater than 5 miles and seek resolution with the relevant MS, reporting any action to the WENDWG secretary.	ENC Coordinator Region I	30 Dec 17
15.	Member states are to play their role to facilitate establishment of MSI related contacts (point of contact) with coastal states that are not in direct communication with Navarea IX coordinator.	All	Progressive
16.	CB coordinator of RSAHC is to be nominated; MS are requested to propose names to Chairman.	All	30 Dec 17