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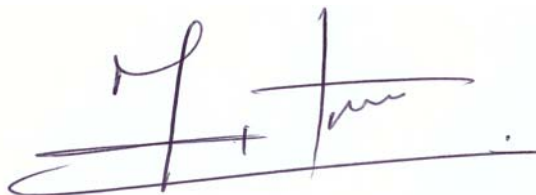
TSUNAMI DISASTER IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

References: A) CL 43/2005 dated 26 April 2005
B) CL11/2005 dated 21 January 2005
C) CL 59/2005 dated 31 May 2005

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The IHB thanks the following 5 countries who provided comments on the draft document "IHO RESPONSE TO DISASTERS" circulated as Annex A to Reference C: Ecuador, Greece, Japan, Peru and the UK. The comments provided are at Annex A
2. The amendments proposed by the UK are considered to improve the "IHO RESPONSE TO DISASTERS" text by more clearly reflecting the importance of the role to be played by the RHC Chairmen. A revised text showing the changes made to the text circulated with Reference C is attached at Annex B. The IHB considers that it was the will of the Special Meeting held following the 3rd EIHC that this text should be included in the Technical Resolutions of the IHO and intends to include the attached text as TR K4.5.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Annex A: MS Comments
Annex B: IHO Response to disasters.

Ecuador:

With reference to the IHB Circular Letter N° 59/2005, Ecuador agrees with the initiative of creating a project on the “IHO Response to the Disasters”, as it is important that all the Member States be organized in view of natural disasters related to the ocean and its environment as is the case for the tsunami.

Concerning the region of the South-eastern Pacific where Ecuador is located, it would be necessary to reinforce the relationship with the PTWC particularly referring to the transmission of real time warning messages’ information. Furthermore, tidal and seismic regional networks should be established, taking advantage of the equipment that some countries have and others do not.

Training will also be an important resource to determine the causes, effects and possible contingency plans to be used. Currently Ecuador is reinforcing its tsunami warning system, but there are economic and technological restrictions. Anyway, the coastal community is continuously being trained and informed about how to act before a possible local or remote tsunami. The exchange of bathymetric information will certainly be important to develop programmes as the tsunami travel time or to elaborate the respective flooding charts of each country.

Greece:

We agree with the revised text of the “IHO Response to Disasters” as amended after the comments provided by the MS during the Special Session.

Japan:

In my experience that we have been affected by a lot of disasters including Tsunami in Japan, the most important thing we have to take care is to know the particular person who is appropriate to communicate in the case of disaster each other. So I would like to propose that the IHB should maintain the list of the contact persons of the Member States in case of disaster and the Member States should keep the list.

I think that the Member States and Regional Hydrographic Commissions have too many obligations and bear heavy burdens in the proposal for the Resolution. In my sense, this proposal is too ideal to carry out. As I proposed in 1, shall we exchange the information of contact persons for the first step? I believe this is efficient enough to collect the information and to take measures.

In conclusion, I do not support the revised draft “IHO Response to disaster” to be inserted in the Resolution but propose that the IHB should maintain the list of the contact persons, and that it should be inserted in the Resolution.

But this draft plan “ IHO Response to disaster “ records what the IHB, chairs of RHCs, and Member States should carry out in case of a disaster. So I propose that this draft plan should be recorded in the REPORT of the Special Session on the Tsunami Disaster held in Monaco for reference of Chairs of RHCs and Member States. Every RHC Chair and every Member State will take note of this draft plan and take appropriate measure when they are affected by a disaster.

Please understand that this propose is not backward looking but realistic and practical.

Peru:

We fully agree that, in the case of disasters having an effect on the coastal zones, such as the one which happened recently in the Indian Ocean, the IHO must not be free from such events, but rather achieve some actions within the limits of its competence, as for example to get the information as soon as possible, evaluating the situation and providing all the available support leading to the re-establishment of the safety of the navigation, as well as the coordination and the facilitation of the hydrographic research and the requirements of the new charting of the affected zones. Therefore, we think that this task is completely compatible with the IHO objectives.

We also esteem that the considerations of the Proceedings and Guidelines to be executed by the IHB concerning the actions and the coordination with other international bodies, aiming at obtaining support and over all if this is of a financial nature are relevant, are essential in such emergency situations, taking into consideration that in many cases there are not sufficient resources to give priority to the required new researches, hydrographic surveying and charting of the affected zones, as the few resources available from the national or international agencies to reduce the disasters are generally assigned to other first necessity priorities of the population.

United Kingdom:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the text of the draft IHO policy on response to disasters. The attached copy contains some proposed amendments, which are shown in track change mode. Only that related to sub-paragraph 2.c., first bullet, is substantive. The UK believes that it is most important that the response process reinforces the co-ordinating role of the RHC Chairmen. The IHB should always go to them in the first instance. Similarly, MS should be encouraged to communicate through the RHC Chairman in circumstances, which demand early, and effective regional co-operation. It is assumed that this is the intent of the dotted line between IHB and regional MS in the wiring diagram. This needs to be made explicit in the text.

IHO RESPONSE TO DISASTERS

1. Introduction.

In view of the severe hydrographic impact on Safety of Navigation caused by the 2004 tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean and the consequent need for support; the International Hydrographic Organization, its Member States and Regional Hydrographic Commissions need to put in place procedures and guidelines so as to be able to provide an immediate and appropriate response to any future disaster affecting coastal areas of the world. These procedures and guidelines should aim to ensure the immediate assessment of the damage, its effect on National and International shipping and to inform mariners and other interested parties of that damage, particularly with respect to navigational hazards. They should also identify actions required and support needed to recover from the damage. Actions will be co-ordinated by the IHB, in co-operation with the relevant Regional Hydrographic Commission(s), Member State(s) and other International Organizations, as appropriate.

It is emphasised that it is very important for coastal States to collect relevant coastal and bathymetric data in their areas of responsibility and to make these available to the relevant databases in order to be used for the establishment, and improvement, of tsunami early warning systems, protection of coastal areas and relevant simulation studies. Any necessary regional cooperation for the collection of shallow and deep-water bathymetry will be coordinated by the IHB in cooperation with other States in the Region and International Organizations as appropriate.

The intention is to describe the procedures and provide guidance to be followed, at National, Regional and International level within the structure of the IHO; it is not to establish or operate disaster warning systems and services.

2. Procedures and Guidelines.

a. By Member States.

Each Member State should develop an action plan to be undertaken in the case of a disaster in coastal areas under its jurisdiction. It is very important that each State provides a point of conduct for communication purposes; this should be the Director of the Hydrographic Service or Maritime Safety Agency or other appropriate person familiar with maritime procedures. These plans will contain, as a minimum, the following key elements:

- Assess the extent of damage to the coastal area particularly to ports, harbours, straits, approaches, restricted areas etc.
- Assess, in co-operation with other National Agencies, e.g. Lighthouse Authorities, Port Authorities, the extent of damage to navigational aids.
- Undertake preliminary re-surveys, as soon as possible, starting with the navigationally most sensitive areas in order to evaluate the specific effects on shipping and ensure the continuation of support and supplies through maritime channels and ports, marking new dangers where necessary.
- Promulgate warnings and advice to shipping as appropriate through existing channels (NAVTEX, SafetyNet). Co-operate with the NAVAREA Co-ordinator and other National co-ordinators so that this information can be made available to the mariners as soon as possible and beyond the area of national jurisdiction.
- Inform the Chairman of the Regional Hydrographic Commission and the IHB of the situation, providing details of the damage, actions taken and indicating what support, if any, is needed.
- Assess and define any new hydrographic / cartographic requirements.
- Provide follow up reports to the Chairman of the Regional Commission and the IHB.

b. By Regional Hydrographic Commissions.

The Chairman of the Regional Hydrographic Commission will be responsible for co-ordinating the actions needed within the Region. In order to achieve this, the RHC should develop a 'disaster' action plan, aimed at supporting States in the area to assess the hydrographic damage, provide support and co-ordinate actions and efforts. These plans will be focused on the following:

- Communicating, by the quickest means available, with the focal points of the States in the Region, in order to make an initial evaluation of the extent of the damage.
- Deciding whether a Regional technical task team needs to visit States in the area to support the evaluation of the damage and support needed.
- Deciding, based on the information collected, whether an Extraordinary Meeting of the RHC is needed, in order to discuss in detail the problems, evaluate the damage and respond to requests for support.
- Deciding if the Chairman needs to take a co-ordinating role in assessing damage, providing support and broadcasting information to mariners.
- Informing the IHB on the situation, the actions taken and the need, if any, for external support.
- Monitoring the progress of the actions agreed in the area, keeping Member States in the Region and IHB informed accordingly.
- Including this issue as a permanent Agenda item on RHC meetings in order to monitor the readiness of the Commission to respond to disasters and conducting regular table-top exercises to evaluate the procedures.

c. By the IHB.

The IHB will co-ordinate the actions required of Member States and Regional Hydrographic Commissions in order to assess damage and will co-operate with other International Organizations as appropriate to co-ordinate any external support required. The IHB will undertake the following tasks:

- Communicate with the ~~Member States and~~ Chairmen of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions **and, where necessary, directly with Member States in the region(s) affected**, in order to collect information relating to the scale of the damage, actions taken, the support needed and the desirability of a regional meeting.
- Participate as appropriate in meetings organized by the RHC or Member States, to determine problems and the actions required to remedy the situation
- Co-operate with other International Organizations, informing them of matters affecting the safety of navigation, the needs of Member States, **and** actions taken and seeking where appropriate, support from these Organizations for the repair of the damage.
- Invite other International Organizations to participate in Regional Meetings, in order to contribute to the discussions and to the required actions.
- Monitor developments and inform Member States on all issues associated with the damage, actions taken and support needed.
- Investigate the willingness of Member States to provide support and co-ordinate the appropriate actions with the affected States in close co-operation with the Chairman of the RHC.
- Participate in discussions at RHC meetings to monitor requirements, develop responses to possible disasters and test the procedures and readiness to respond by tabletop exercises.

3. IHO Disaster Reaction Organization

IHO Disaster Reaction Organisation

