

## **5 CONSIDERATION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN INMARSAT AND COSPAS-SARSAT**

### **INMARSAT SERVICES**

5.1 The Sub-Committee noted that the Secretariat, in consultation with IMSO and Inmarsat, had issued:

- .1 COMSAR.1/Circ.50/Rev.3 on Distress priority communications for RCCs from shore-to-ship via Inmarsat, containing the updated List of RCCs associated with Inmarsat Land Earth Stations (LESSs); and
- .2 COMSAR.1/Circ.53/Rev.1 containing the updated List of Land Earth Station (LES) Operation Coordinators in the Inmarsat system.

### **Distress priority communications in the shore-to-ship direction**

5.2 The Sub-Committee recalled that COMSAR 15 had considered information and recommendations related to arrangements for the use of distress priority communications in the shore-to-ship direction (COMSAR 15/5) and revised and approved COMSAR.1/Circ.50/Rev.1 on Distress priority Communications for RCC from shore-to-ship via Inmarsat.

5.3 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/5 (IMSO) providing additional and updated information in relation to arrangements for the use of distress priority communications in the shore-to-ship direction via Inmarsat and decided to:

- .1 refer this document to the SAR Working Group to review COMSAR.1/Circ.50/Rev.3 in the light of the additional information provided; and
- .2 invite Contracting Governments, SAR authorities and RCCs to liaise with Inmarsat Customer Services to obtain their dedicated 7-digit PIN code and instructions for making shore-to-ship distress priority voice calls.

### **Analysis and assessment of the performance by Inmarsat Global Limited of the Company's obligations for the provision of maritime services within the GMDSS**

5.4 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/5/1 (IMSO) providing analysis and assessment of the performance by Inmarsat Global Limited of the Company's obligations for the provision of maritime services within the GMDSS, as overseen by IMSO. The information covered the period from 1 November 2010 to 31 October 2011.

5.5 The IMSO observer provided further information relating the Inmarsat satellite service outage on 22 October 2011, derived from the subsequent inquest into that event, and undertook to provide further relevant information to the Sub-Committee at its next session.

5.6 In light of the foregoing, the Sub-Committee agreed to modify IMSO's assessment of Inmarsat's performance as follows: "It is assessed that, during this period, with the exception of the service outage in the Pacific Ocean Region (POR) on 22 October 2011, Inmarsat has continued to provide a sufficient quality of service to meet its obligations under the GMDSS". The Sub-Committee further noted with appreciation that Inmarsat had provided satisfactory services in the other three Ocean Regions.

5.7 The IMSO observer also informed that one of the Inmarsat satellites had suffered a problem recently. The satellite concerned was of the second generation I-2 F-4 satellites, which was more than 20 years old and was programmed to be taken out of service towards the end of 2012. On Tuesday 13 March, it suffered a total failure of one of its two main batteries and the decision was taken to decommission it immediately. The IMSO observer assured the Sub-Committee that this satellite was not used to provide primary or backup GMDSS services and its loss had no effect on the provision of maritime distress and safety services.

#### **COSPAS-SARSAT SERVICES**

5.8 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/5/2 (Cospas-Sarsat) providing a status report on the Cospas-Sarsat system, including System operations, space and ground segments, beacons, false alerts and results of MCC-SPOC communication tests.

5.9 In the ensuing discussion, the views were expressed: on the one hand that the issue of non-responsive SPOCs might be an issue to be included in the Voluntary IMO Member States Audit Scheme (VIMSAS); and on the other hand that it might not be appropriate to include it in VIMSAS.

5.10 After a brief discussion, the Sub-Committee decided to refer the matter of possible actions to be taken in the case of non-responsive SPOCs to the SAR Working Group for detailed consideration and advice.

#### **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SAR WORKING GROUP**

5.11 The Sub-Committee established the SAR Working Group under the Chairmanship of Mr. N. Clifford (New Zealand) and instructed it to take into account decisions of, and comments and proposals made in Plenary, and consider:

- .1 document COMSAR 16/5 on arrangements for the use of distress priority communications in the shore-to-ship direction via Inmarsat and review COMSAR/Circ.50/Rev.3, and advise whether there was a need to revise it; and
- .2 document COMSAR 16/5/2, paragraphs 17 to 19 and provide advice regarding the matter of non-responsive SPOCs, taking into account the information concerning the report on SPOC communication tests (paragraph 7.2.1.7 of the annex to document COMSAR 16/6),

and submit its report on Wednesday, 14 March 2012.

**Report of the SAR Working Group**

5.12 On receipt of the report of the SAR Working Group (COMSAR 16/WP.3), the Sub-Committee took action as summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

5.13 The Sub-Committee agreed that there was no need to revise COMSAR/Circ.50/Rev.3 on distress priority communications for RCCs from shore-to-ship via Inmarsat.

5.14 Noting the low response rate from search and rescue point of contacts (SPOCs) to Cospas-Sarsat test calls, the Sub Committee invited the Committee to remind Member States, with a low response rate, of the importance of a reliable test call response of their SPOC.

5.15 The Sub-Committee requested the Committee to inform the Technical Co-operation Committee on the perceived need for some countries identified in document COMSAR 16/5/2, paragraph 17, for capacity-building and technical assistance to help ensure timely response of their SPOCs upon receiving distress alerts.