

## MESO-AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (MACHC)

### SEMINAR ON RAISING AWARENESS OF HYDROGRAPHY

Manzanillo, Mexico

9-10 December 2014

#### **Seminar**

This two day seminar was arranged to precede the 15<sup>th</sup> MACHC meeting with the dual objective of raising awareness of the importance of hydrography for the Associate and Observer nations of the MACHC, and with the participants staying on for the main MACHC meeting, exposing them to the benefits of being proactive members of the MACHC and encourage eventual full membership of the IHO. The seminar was part of the 2013-17 MACHC CB Plan and was funded from the IHO CB fund.

The presenters at the seminar were drawn from the IHO (President Robert Ward), IMO (Mr Colin Young), IALA Academy (Mr Steve Bennett), OceanWise (Mr John Pepper & Mike Osborne), UKHO (Mr Chris Thorne & Mr Sam Harper) and PAIGH (Mr Paul Cooper). The MACHC CB Coordinator Mr Jeff Bryant and IHB Assistant Director, Mr Alberto Costa Neves, convened the seminar.

Attendees from Antigua & Barbuda, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Haiti, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago and St Vincent & The Grenadines represented various levels of government, maritime or related administrative areas.

The objectives of the seminar were:

- to raise levels of awareness of the obligations placed on all IMO Member States regarding the provision of hydrographic services, and in particular the obligations on States implicit under SOLAS V/9;
- to provide an overview of the principles of surveying and charting and the wide range of benefits of hydrography;
- to identify the various options available to MACHC States to fulfil their obligations under SOLAS V/9; and
- to enable participants to identify the impediments to fulfilling SOLAS V/9 obligations and consider various strategies to overcome those difficulties.

The principal conclusions and outcomes from the seminar were that:

- each MACHC State should have an appropriate in-country capability to support its international hydrographic obligations under SOLAS V/9 so as to best serve its national interests,

- the government authority or department responsible for hydrography in each MACHC State should be clearly identified in the relevant statutory documentation;
- the authority or department assigned responsibility for maritime affairs, particularly maritime safety, is probably the best authority to be responsible for hydrography in each MACHC State;
- national hydrographic coordination committees should be established in each MACHC State in order to engage all stakeholders and to determine priorities and allocate resources. The committees should be chaired or convened by the authority assigned responsibility for ensuring the provision of appropriate hydrographic services;
- the importance and benefits of hydrography in the region should be brought to the attention of government leaders so as to establish appropriate priorities and underpin any subsequent hydrographic capacity building efforts; and
- all States in the region should join the Meso-American & Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC) in order to benefit from better regional cooperation regarding hydrography.

Note, as a result of this seminar Costa Rica and St Vincent & The Grenadines subsequently joined the MACHC as Associate Members.

The seminar participants are now in a better position to determine how best to fulfil their States' obligations for providing appropriate hydrographic services in the interests of safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment.