

Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Capacity Building Training Course WG

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the ABLOS Working Group on “The Law of the Sea Training Programme was held at the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) in Taunton, UK on Friday 20 February 2009. The Chairman was Chris Carleton and those present were Steve Shipman from the IHB and John Brown from the UKHO. Contributions to the discussion had been received from Shin Tani, Ron McNab and Muhammad Bashir by means of e-mail in response to a draft agenda which had been circulated to members of the Working Group by Steve Shipman.

Steve Shipman explained that the IHB had been approached by 2 Regional Hydrographic Commissions to explore the feasibility of facilitating some form of capacity building with respect to the practicalities of maritime boundary delimitation. To that end, the IHB directors had requested that ABLOS discuss the topic and determine a way ahead.

It was felt that any approach for assistance had to come from the regions themselves, and they should determine what assistance they felt was required and submit this request to the IHB Capacity Building Committee (CBC) who in turn would discuss any requests, see what funds were available and decide priorities for the following year. The CBC have an annual meeting in June<sup>1</sup>, therefore it was unlikely that there would be any notification of requirements for training before 2011 as no state has yet specifically requested any training.

Whilst a regional basis may be the best method for determining the requirement for training, it may not be the best for delivering the practicalities of it, with only 1 representative from each country; it was felt that for training purposes it was best to concentrate on one country at a time, although it was pointed out that the view from the CBC was perceived to be that arranging training for just one country could be verging on consultancy, which was not the aim of their request.

With regard to the actual content of the course, the “menu” type approach proposed by Muhammad was discussed and felt to be more appropriate in that regional commissions would be able to select certain topics from a list which they felt states required assistance with. The topics available should be: determination of maritime space, maritime boundary delimitation interlinked with boundary negotiation and dispute resolution with emphasis on practical exercises with a regional flavour. This approach was perceived to be far more flexible than putting together a more generic package which in itself had certain advantages that once put together it had the potential to be used several times and in the end the argument for flexibility and the ability to tailor for specific regional issues was the preferred one. It was also felt that any training should in no way compete with or be seen as an alternative to any regular academic programmes. The training should be aimed at those who will be practically involved as team members in any delimitation and they should be from mixed disciplines.

---

<sup>1</sup> Post Meeting Note - The 2009 CBC Meeting will be from 11-13 May in Seoul, Rep of Korea.

The ideal duration of such a training package was discussed at great length as there were several linked issues – who would deliver the training, how many and most importantly, who would fund it. The ideal length was felt to be in the region of three to five days, depending on the content of the course and how the practical exercises were constructed, and it was felt that this could be covered by a minimum of two lecturers who would be drawn primarily from ABLOS. The question of funding was raised, and the view from the IHB was that CBC funding was for student participation only, so it would more than likely have to be self funded by the lecturers (or rather their employers). Use of the ABLOS fund was discussed, but was felt to be entirely inappropriate. Costs could be defrayed by co-locating it with the venue where the ABLOS business meeting is held in the years that it is not in Monaco, this would require some host nation support from the country requesting the training but a requirement which was felt to be not unreasonable in the circumstances.

This tied in with the observation that the whole process should give plenty of notice to the lecturers who would be volunteers and providing their own material. It was felt that there is currently sufficient background material available such as the TALOS manual, but it was important that training material for each course should be prepared by the lecturers who were going to deliver it.

It was agreed that the Chairman would report on the deliberations of the meeting to remainder of the WG who were not able to be physically present so they could have the chance to comment further on any of the discussions, and then forward a completed report to the remainder of ABLOS, with the aim of a final report going to the CBC in time for their June<sup>2</sup> meeting.

---

<sup>2</sup> Post Meeting Note - The 2009 CBC Meeting will be from 11-13 May in Seoul, Rep of Korea.