

## **6 SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR)**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES ON HARMONIZED AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE PROCEDURES, INCLUDING SAR TRAINING MATTERS**

6.1 The Sub-Committee noted that, as requested by COMSAR 15, MSC 89 had extended the target completion year for the planned output on the "Harmonization of aeronautical and maritime search and rescue procedures, including SAR training matters" to 2012.

### **Eighteenth Meeting of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on the Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime SAR**

6.2 The Sub-Committee noted that, as agreed by COMSAR 15 and endorsed by MSC 89, the eighteenth session of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on the Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue was held in Stavanger, Norway, from 3 to 7 October 2011.

6.3 The Sub-Committee briefly considered document COMSAR 16/6 (Secretariat) containing the report of the JWG and decided to refer this document to the SAR Working Group for detailed consideration of the issues reported on in general and, in particular, paragraph 2 containing the list of actions requested.

6.4 After briefly discussing matters related to the composition of the JWG and the meeting venues, the Sub-Committee decided on the continuation of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group (JWG) for the next session planned to be held in Hong Kong, China from 10 to 14 September 2012 and the associated Terms of Reference and provisional agenda, as set out in document COMSAR 16/WP.3, annex 4 and invited the Committee to authorize the convening of this intersessional meeting.

### **Smartphone SAR e-mail application**

6.5 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/6/2 (United States) providing information that a SAR application was being sold that used e-mail to notify SAR authorities of a distress situation. It was also noted that the United States Coast Guard had safety concerns about this application and had asked for its removal from sale in the United States.

6.6 After some discussion, the Sub-Committee concurred with the concerns expressed by the United States and decided to instruct the SAR Working Group to prepare a draft COMSAR circular with the aim to inform Member Governments on the issue and recommend actions to be taken.

### **Satellite-enabled Emergency Location Device**

6.7 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/6/3 (United States) informing the Sub-Committee of the increasing use of satellite emergency notification devices (SENDs) that operated over satellite systems other than Cospas-Sarsat and referred it to the SAR Working Group for detailed consideration and advice.

### **Proposal to include number of persons on board as an AIS message**

6.8 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/6/4 (Argentina) proposing an evaluation of the technical and operational feasibility of including "number of persons on

board" (NPB) as a mandatory field in the AIS message data structure for class A and class B equipment and referred it to the SAR Working Group for detailed consideration of the operational desirability and feasibility of this proposal.

### **SAR/Galileo Return Link Service Definition**

6.9 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/6/5 (European Commission), commenting on the report of the JWG (COMSAR 16/6) and providing additional information on the SAR/Galileo Return Link Service and referred it to the SAR Working Group for detailed consideration and advice.

### **Report of the World Maritime Rescue Congress 2011**

6.10 The Sub-Committee noted with appreciation the information provided in document COMSAR 16/INF.5 (IMRF) containing a brief report on the World Maritime Rescue Congress held in Shanghai, China, during August 2011.

### **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL SAR PLAN FOR THE PROVISION OF MARITIME SAR SERVICES, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR ROUTEING DISTRESS INFORMATION IN THE GMDSS**

#### **Global SAR Plan**

6.11 The Sub-Committee considered document COMSAR 16/6/1 (Secretariat) and:

- .1 noted the information provided advising that, as instructed by COMSAR 15 and based on information provided by Member Governments, the Secretariat had issued SAR.8/Circ.3 (Global SAR Plan);
- .2 noted that the information on the availability of SAR services had been integrated in the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS), to support the Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system and that this information had been allocated in a module called "Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR)", which contained the same information as available in SAR.8/Circ.3; and
- .3 in line with the proposal by the Secretariat that it would be appropriate, agreed to change the current system of communicating information on SAR services to the Organization as from 1 May 2012, to allow access to Member Governments to enter and update information on SAR services directly into GISIS; and interested parties, including the general public, direct access to updated information on SAR services (on "read-alone" basis).

6.12 To this end, the Sub-Committee instructed the SAR Working Group to finalize a draft COMSAR circular (COMSAR 16/6/1, annex) to clarify the procedure of entering and updating information on SAR services into GISIS and on how to get access to the information for operational use.

### **Establishment of two Regional MRCCs and five Associated MRCCs in Central America**

6.13 The Sub-Committee noted that MSC 89 had approved the development of a technical co-operation project aimed at the establishment of two Regional MRCCs and five Associated MRCCs in Central America for search and rescue coordination purposes and requested the Secretariat to take action accordingly.

6.14 The Sub-Committee further noted that the Secretariat had organized two meetings at IMO Headquarters with representatives from the seven Central American countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) and that IMO assessment missions had been undertaken by SAR specialists from Chile in December 2011.

6.15 The Sub-Committee also noted that a SAR regional meeting on the development of a multilateral agreement for the Central American region was organized in Panama City, Panama, on 8 and 9 February 2012 and that the Committee was informed of the progress made in regard to the development of this technical co-operation project (MSC 90/8/1).

### **Establishment of Regional MRCCs and Associated MRCCs in Africa**

6.16 The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire expressed their appreciation to the Organization and Member Governments in supporting to re-equip the Abidjan MRCC after the equipment had been destroyed. They expressed further the need for support in relation to training of the personnel of the MRCC, as well as in relation to other safety-related matters.

6.17 The delegation of Norway informed the Sub-Committee of their experience of cooperation with Regional MRCC in Rabat, Morocco, which justified the establishment of Regional MRCCs and Associated MRCCs in Africa.

### **Report of the 8th Black Sea Regional Conference on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System GMDSS**

6.18 The Sub-Committee noted with appreciation the information contained in document COMSAR 16/INF.6 (Romania), briefly summarizing the outcome of the 8th Black Sea Conference on Maritime Search and Rescue and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System which was held in Constanta, Romania, from 31 October to 1 November 2011.

### **List of IMO documents and publications which should be held by an MRCC**

6.19 The delegation of France requested that at the next revision of SAR.7/Circ.10 (List of IMO documents and publications which should be held by an MRCC), the reference to the Admiralty List of Radio Signals Vol.5 (ALRS), should be generalized by referring to Lists of Radio Signals published by hydrographic services.

### **Instructions for the SAR Working Group**

6.20 The Sub-Committee instructed the SAR Working Group, taking into account decisions of, and comments and proposals made in Plenary, to:

- .1 consider document COMSAR 16/6 containing the report of the eighteenth session of ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group and advise the Sub-Committee, as appropriate, on the actions requested in paragraph 2 and, in particular, finalize the draft revision of MSC.1/Circ.1185 on the Guide for cold water survival;
- .2 consider document COMSAR 16/6/1 containing Information on the availability of SAR services worldwide (Global SAR Plan) and finalize the draft COMSAR circular on Guidance for entering and updating information on Search and Rescue into GISIS and on how to get access to the information for operational use;

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- .3 in relation to the information provided in document COMSAR 16/6/2 on the "Search and Rescue by SAR" application ("SAR APP"), prepare a draft COMSAR circular with the aim to inform Member Governments on the issue and recommend actions to be taken;
  - .4 consider document COMSAR 16/6/3 on satellite emergency notification devices (SENDs) and advise the Sub-Committee, as appropriate;
  - .5 consider document COMSAR 16/6/4 to evaluate the technical and operational feasibility of including "number of persons on board" (NPB) as a field in the AIS message data structure for class A and class B equipment and advise the Sub-Committee regarding the operational desirability and feasibility of this proposal;
  - .6 consider document COMSAR 16/6/5 on SAR/Galileo Return Link Service Definition and advise the Sub-Committee, taking into account information contained in paragraph 7.1 of the annex to document COMSAR 16/6; and
  - .7 provide proper justification, if there is a need for extension of the target completion year of the agenda item "Development of guidelines on harmonized aeronautical and maritime search and rescue procedures, including SAR training matters" to 2013,

and submit its report on Wednesday, 14 March 2012.

#### **Report of the SAR Working Group**

6.21 On receipt of the report of the SAR Working Group (COMSAR 16/WP.3, section 4), the Sub-Committee took action as summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

6.22 The Sub-Committee endorsed:

- .1 the draft revised MSC circular on Guide for cold water survival as set out in annex 8 and invited the Committee to approve it;
- .2 the draft COMSAR circular on Guidance for entering and updating information on Search and Rescue into GISIS and on how to access information for operational use as set out in annex 9 and invited the Committee to approve it;
- .3 the draft COMSAR circular on Guidance on Smartphone and Other Computer Device SAR Applications, as set out in annex 10 and invited the Committee to approve it;
- .4 the acceptability of the Return Link Message (RLM) Type-1 including the optional inclusion of this particular functionality within distress beacons; and
- .5 the further consideration of the complex matter of RLM Type-2 messages by the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group.

6.23 In discussing document COMSAR 16/6/3, several delegations had expressed concern in the Working Group over the different approaches used by individual SEND service providers to alert SAR authorities. The Sub-Committee recognized the merits of combining the capabilities of a SEND unit with the 406 MHz distress beacon capability noting

that manufacturers of any such combined device would have to apply the standards established by Cospas-Sarsat.

6.24 The Cospas-Sarsat observer informed that document COMSAR 16/WP.3, paragraph 4.20 should read as follows: "The observer of Cospas-Sarsat noted the importance of the issues raised in document COMSAR 16/6/3 and advised the group that the matter also would be monitored within the appropriate Cospas-Sarsat bodies". He further advised, in relation document COMSAR 16/WP.3, paragraph 4.24, that the Joint Committee would meet in June 2012 and the Cospas-Sarsat Council in October 2012.

6.25 The Sub-Committee noted the pros and cons of the operational desirability and feasibility of including a mandatory application of an AIS message standard field for "number of persons on board" and agreed that SAR services would greatly benefit from such information if it correctly reflected the number of persons on board at any given time. However, no consensus could be reached on the mandatory application for class A and class B equipment.

6.26 The Sub-Committee considered the matter of manual activation of EPIRBs at the early stage of an emergency and agreed to invite Member Governments and interested organizations to submit proposals clarifying the issue for seafarers to the next session of the Sub-Committee.

6.27 The Sub-Committee invited the Committee to extend the target completion year for the agenda item "Development of guidelines on harmonized aeronautical and maritime search and rescue procedures, including SAR training matters" to 2013.