

**FIFTH MEETING OF THE IHO INTER REGIONAL COORDINATION
COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC5
Wollongong 3-4 June 2013**

**REPORT OF THE EASTERN ATLANTIC HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (EAthC)
By the Chairman Ingenieur General Bruno Frachon (FR)**

- 1. Chairman:** VA Agostinho Ramos da Silva (PT)
Bruno Frachon (FR), from the 16th of November 2012
Vice-Chair: according to the statutes of the EAthC, the vice-chair is designated or elected at the opening of each conference, for the duration of the conference.

- 2. Membership:**
Members: Cameroon, France, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Spain
Associate Members: Benin, Cape Verde, Congo (Rep. of), Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo.

Observers: Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Republic Democratic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, United Kingdom, United States and IHB.

- 3. Meetings :**

The Commission met on 14 -16 November 2012 in Lisbon (PT). The next meeting is scheduled for September 2014 at a location yet to be determined, in accordance with the EAthC Statutes.

4. Agenda Items:

Task numbers refer to IHO WP for 2013 (see CL 93/2012)

IHO Work Programme 1 – "Corporate Affairs"

Element 1.1 Co-operation with International Organizations and participation in relevant meetings.

Task 1.1.8: IALA has been invited to the 12th EAthC conference last November to present their activities and tools, such as the Worldwide IALA Academy. Moreover, this conference has been an occasion to raise awareness about the involvement of IALA in the coordination mechanism between IHO/IMO/IAEA to improve the capacity building efforts of these organizations.

Task 1.1.12: Mandatory IMO Audit Scheme was discussed at the last meeting (action IRCC4/27). The interest for future audits to formalize arrangements between coastal States and charting authorities was stressed upon (cf. task 3.5.6).

Task 1.1.14: The paper « Blueprint for Ocean and Coastal Sustainability - Rio + 20 » was commented at the last meeting of the Commission (action IRCC4/17).

Element 1.2 Information Management

Task 1.2.4.1: One of EAtHC's main issues remains the contact list management. So it has been decided that once a year, IHO Yearbook should be updated by EAtHC and IHB should add the date of the update for every coastal State. Several EAtHC States have then provided their contact details to IHB: Senegal (March 2013), Gabon (November 2012), Maroc (December 2012), Portugal (January 2013) and Spain (December 2012).

Element 1.3 Public Relations

Task 1.3.3.3: IMO Council accepted Morocco's offer to host the Parallel Event of 2014 World Maritime Day. EAtHC next task is now to consider how the Region could benefit from this event to promote the importance of hydrography in the maritime activities.

IHO Work Programme 2 - "Services and Standards"

Element 2.3 Nautical Cartography

Task 2.3.2.6: Since the last EAtHC conference, IHB and the CHATINTCHART Coordinator have pooled their efforts to make the S-11 Region G (CHATINTCHART) catalogue update process more efficient. From now, the CHATINTCHART catalogue structure will be compliant with S-11 format and every inputs/updates provided by charting authorities will be only addressed to the Regional Coordinator before transmission to the IHB.

IHO Work Programme 3 – " Inter Regional Coordination and Support"

Element 3.1 Co-operation with Member States and attendance at relevant meetings

Task 3.1.18: The last EAtHC conference has, for the first time in that region, welcomed several industrial stakeholders to take part to some of the commission debates.

Task 3.1.19: Members awareness has been raised about the request regarding the providing of national focal points in response of the IHO Circular Letter 73/2012 dated July 20th 2013.

Element 3.2 Increase participation by non Member States

Task 3.2.2.1: Following up the IHO technical visit held in September 2011 (Ing. Gen.(R) M. Le Gouic), Cameroon has ratified the IHO convention and became the 81st Member State of the organization. The last conference has been the occasion to reaffirm the will of this commission to continue to engage other pending applicants in the region to encourage the ratification of the IHO convention (action IRCC4/02). Another aspect pointed out has been towards new candidates to IHO to proceed in parallel through diplomatic channels to get approval from IHO Member States. Those aspects have been raised as EAtHC permanent actions.

Besides, due to the low participation of EAtHC non-IHO members coastal states at the XVIII International Hydrographic Commission (DRC (suspended Member State) and Guinea), an action has been adopted in order to encourage and invite those coastal states to participate to the next EIHC scheduled in October 2014.

Lastly, the statutes of the EAtHC allow associate members to host EAtHC meeting (action IRCC4/09)

Task 3.2.2.2: After the letter sent by EAthC Chairman to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to encourage its reinsertion in the IHO in 2011 (action IRCC4/03) and their participation at the XVIII International Hydrographic Commission, which has been considered as a positive sign, no further actions have been taken by the commission.

Task 3.2.11 : attention of the EAthC has been drawn to the approval of pending applications for IHO membership (action IRCC4/01), (Viet Nam, Brunei Darussalam and Georgia), during its last meeting in Portugal.

Element 3.3 Capacity Building Management

Task 3.3.3 : During that same conference, an action has been confirmed to schedule a high level meeting for West Africa with IHO representation to discuss all hydrographic issues within this region. This meeting, organized by the Republic of Congo, will involve the Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA). Besides, the commission also decided to suggest to the Port Management Association of West and Central Africa (PMAWCA) to consider including an item on hydrographic capacity at its next subsequent meeting. Moreover, EAthC will also take care of inviting those two organizations to participate to the fifth EIHC scheduled in 2014.

Task 3.3.8 : Facing the request from several coastal states for technical advices, and possible accreditation and recognition concerning their national/regional training centre, it has been decided to investigate the interest of a regional academy for hydrographic matters, based on coordination between existing training centres in the region. Moreover, following EAthC action 12-18 a questionnaire has been sent to the States (EAthC CL02/2013, April 16th 2013) requesting this kind of accreditation in order to evaluate their needs and possibilities regarding hydrography and/or cartography. The gathering and synthesis of the answers are under progress.

On the other hand, following up a request for an assessment visit to NNHS by Nigeria at the last EAthC conference, the EAthC Chair submitted a proposal for the upgrade, accreditation and recognition of the NNHS as a regional centre to the IBSC Chair.

Element 3.4 Capacity Building Assessment

Task 3.4.1: Since the previous meeting in Accra, three capacity building technical and advisory visits were conducted in the region – Gabon, Guinea-Bissau and Cameroon. Despite these successful activities, it is necessary to strengthen Capacity Building initiatives in the region, to identify more efficient strategies that could be endorsed by the countries themselves and to guarantee the commitment and participation of the concerned coastal States. To pursue in that way, actions towards those three countries have been adopted since the last meeting in Lisbon: implementing the recommendations issued in the visit reports and create a National Hydrographic Committee. In that way, a dedicated cover letter from EAthC Chair has been addressed with the 12th EAthC official report to members and associate members.

Element 3.5 Capacity Building Provision

Task 3.5.2: Last November, a regional course on hydrographic survey and cartography for French spoken countries was organized by the International Maritime Organisation, in collaboration with the IHO and SHOM. This course was held at the « Académie Régionale des Sciences et Techniques de la Mer » in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from November 19th to December 1st 2012. A report has been forwarded to IMO and CBSC (action IRCC4/06).

One aspect to mention is that, during the last meeting of this commission (that was held right before the beginning of that course), some coastal States pointed out that as this training session was

organized by the IMO, national maritime authorities tended to select people in maritime safety organization without consulting the national hydrographic organization.

Task 3.5.6: During its last meeting, the commission has emphasized on the need for coastal states to clarify and fulfil their SOLAS responsibilities by establishing some bilateral agreements with charting authorities.

Element 3.6 Coordination of Global Surveying and Charting

Task 3.6.1.1: A permanent action has been approved at the last meeting for not IHO members to set up a table of national responsibilities (MSI, surveys, charts) based by default on the current charting authorities, in order to update C-55 database.

Task 3.6.2.2: Some gaps and overlaps raised by the WEND WG after their last session have pointed out some alarming differences between information detained by RENCs. Since then, the cause has been identified by one of the RENC and some actions have been proceeded to resolve it.

Task 3.6.4.1 : The need for coastal states to report to the Region Chart Coordinator on current or planned high speed craft routes in order to be able to meet IMO requirements has been emphasized and adopted as a permanent action during the last meeting of the commission.

Task 3.7.1: The crucial need to consolidate contact management in the region for that purpose has lead the commission to agree on that members and associate members are now requested to check and update their MSI points of contact to NAVAREA II Coordinator, even if those information are unchanged. Then it has been approved that all coastal states would liaise with NAVAREA II coordinator at least every three months, even if nothing to report. Moreover, the fact that coastal states keep on informing the coordinator regarding oil platforms locations and movements is considered as crucial for navigational safety. Following up that topic raised in Lisboa, a EAtHC coastal state provided last April its charting authority with a ministerial order listing the positions of all platforms within its national waters. Besides, one further important aspect for that topic was to identify every points of contact related to NAVTEX projects, and respond to questions raised by the IMO NAVTEX Panel in cooperation with the NAVAREA II Coordinator.

5. Conclusions:

The main conclusions and recommendations from the EAtHC are as follows:

- The EAtHC Chairman recommands all coastal states of the region to define a list of priorities on hydrographic surveying in order to improve the coverage in the region.
- Coastal States in that region should review their procedures for the transmission of survey data collected by third parties to the concerned cartographic authority, in the relevant clearances or contracting documents with private companies, in order to enable swift updating of nautical documents and charts.
- Following on the optimization of the ENC coverage in the region, Coastal States have been asked through EAtHC circular letter 01/2013 to set up a list of priority for their main uncovered harbours.
- As the last meeting of the commission, it became obvious that in order to increase their hydrographic capacities, coastal states first need to raise awareness of hydrography on a national plan with the creation of national hydrographic committees and by keeping up a good level of dialogue on a regional scale with neighbouring countries. Besides, involving when required other regional maritime organizations can be a strong asset in order to scheme a long term Capacity Building plan.