

REPORT ON THE STATUS AND PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF THE
IHO S-23 WORKING GROUP (S-23 WG)

Introduction

Monaco 12 April 2010

1. With IHB CL 22/2009/rev1 dated 08 April 2009 the Directing Committee:

- informed Member States that the establishment of a Working Group on the revision of Special Publication 23 had been approved;
- provided the amended Terms of Reference (ToR) and Rules of Procedures (RoP), indicating that the WG needed to consider specific topics and finalize them; and
- proposed the WG to hold its first meeting in conjunction with the 4th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC) in June 2009.

2. The first meeting of the S-23 WG took place on Monday 1st June at the Auditorium Prince Rainier III, in Monaco, prior to the opening of the 4th EIHC. It was attended by 35 participants from 14 Member States. The Directing Committee was also present. The opening of the meeting was chaired by the President of the IHB VAdm Alexandros Maratos, while Mr. Michel Huet acted as Secretary of the meeting. The main points of interest of the meeting are listed below:

- VAdm Alexandros Maratos was elected Chairman of the S-23 WG. RAdm Chris Andreasen from the USA was elected Vice-Chairman and Michel Huet was elected Secretary of the S-23 WG;
- The WG discussed and finalized the ToR and RoP;
- Six (6) steps to progress the work of the S-23 were approved; and
- The approved Report of the meeting, including the final ToR and RoP, the list of participants and the table with these six steps, were posted on the IHO web site.

Analysis and status of the steps to progress the work of the S-23 WG

3. **Step No 1.** "IHB to set up an S-23 WG on the IHO website".

A special S-23 WG section was opened on the IHO website. Documents, letters, positions and comments expressed by various members of the WG have been posted under the S-23 WG web site section together with an updated list of participants as indicated by Member States. The 1986 and 2002 drafts of the 4th edition of S-23 were posted on the S-23 WG website, as it was decided during the 1st meeting of the S-23 WG. The S-23 WG section of the IHO web site has been made password protected as indicated with the Secretary's e-mail dated 13 January 2010.

4. **Step No 2.** "France (SHOM) to provide the IHB with standards, definitions and rules of procedure for toponymy. IHB to post these documents on the IHO website".

France has provided this document and it has been posted, in English and French, under the established S-23 WG section of the IHO website with the title, "Standards, Definitions and Rules of Procedures in Toponymy".

5. **Step No 3.** "IHB to circulate a list of areas of possible concern to WG members by end of July 2009".

In an email dated 8 July 2009, the Secretary of the WG provided the members of the WG with a list of three possible areas of concern which have been identified by the Bureau. These three areas of concern which have been posted on the IHO website are the following:

- The sea area between the Korea Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago. Japan on one side, Republic of Korea and DPR of Korea on the other side, have a different view on naming this area;
- The Malacca Strait. The issue refers to whether Malacca Strait will be retained in Chapter VI (South China Sea) of the 2002 draft edition of S-23 or will be shifted to Chapter V (Indian Ocean), as it was requested by India; and
- The South China Sea – East China Sea. China provided comments on the 2002 draft edition of S-23, concerning changes to various parts of the South China Sea – East China Sea, as indicated in the list.

6. **Step No 4.** "WG members to comment on this list by end September 2009".

In an e-mail dated 8 July 2009 the Secretary of the S-23 WG asked its members to review the list and provide their comments before 30th September in accordance with step 4. The following seven Countries provided comments: Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, D.P.R. of Korea, Singapore, South Africa and USA.

7. **Step No 5.** "IHB to circulate a final list to WG members. Member States in any areas of possible concern then to be asked to provide their comments/positions".

On 9 November 2009 a letter was sent (IHB File No S3/7020 dated 9 November 2009) to the S-23 WG members summarizing the results of action taken under step 4 and the responses received. The following are highlighted:

- WG members have not proposed any new "area of concern". Australia has indicated that "it does not intend to raise the limits of the Southern Ocean as an "area of concern" during the current review of S-23 by the WG";
- All responses/comments received have been posted on the IHO website. A letter received from India, confirming their position that the "Malacca Strait with the existing limits" should be maintained in the Indian Ocean, was also posted on the IHO website;
- Members of the WG were asked to comment on these three areas of concern, should they so wish and have not already done so, before 10th January 2010;
- The Russian Federation, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, who do not participate in the S-23 WG, were asked to provide their views for those of the three areas that are directly bordering their coast/waters before 10th January 2010.

8. In an email from the Secretary of the WG dated 15 January, members were informed that the deadline to respond to IHB letter S3/7020 of 9 November 2009 had been extended to 28 February 2010, as several members had indicated that they needed more time to provide their responses. As of 1st March 2010 responses were received from France, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, D.P.R. of Korea, Italy, Indonesia, USA and Argentina. A late response has been received from China on 31st March, similar to the one mentioned in the third bullet of the above paragraph 5. All responses have been posted on the IHO website.

9. A letter received from the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Paris, informing the Bureau on the decision of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to use the name "Sea of Oman" instead of "Gulf of Oman" and the response provided by the Directing Committee, were both posted on the S-23 WG section, under the title "National positions of interest to S-23 WG".

10. **Step No 6.** "Based on the comments received from interested Member States in any areas of concern, IHB to draft a paper on the matter, circulate it to WG members and consider whether a face-to-face meeting is appropriate".

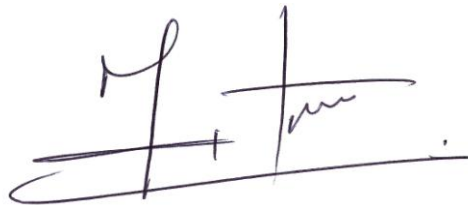
From all the responses received to the three areas of concern, the following can be summarized:

- The Sea area between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago. Comments on this area have been provided by the Republic of Korea, D.P.R. of Korea, Japan, France, Italy and Argentina;
- The Malacca Strait. Comments have been provided by Singapore, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, USA and China; and
- The South China Sea – East China Sea. Comments have been provided by: China, USA, Malaysia and Indonesia. Indonesia has also indicated that they are in the process of establishing “Indonesian Limits of the Seas”.
- The responses received with the arguments and the detailed comments have been posted, as they were received, on the S-23 WG website.

Proposal

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the WG are of the opinion that in order to progress the work and to consider the various opinions expressed on the areas of concern with a consensus approach, a face-to-face meeting is required. If this is acceptable then the meeting can take place 5, 6 and 7 July in the East Asia region, as the areas of concern are all located in this area. The Chair has undertaken appropriate communication with Countries in this region in order to explore and finalize the venue of the meeting and will inform the members of the WG on the final arrangements. If the meeting can not take place on the dates indicated then it will have to be postponed to September-October. Members of the WG are requested to provide any comments that they may have no later than 10th May 2010.

Vice-Admiral Alexandros Maratos
President of the Directing Committee

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke, with a flourish underneath.

Chair of the S-23 WG