

## **12<sup>th</sup> Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission Conference**

**Lisboa, Portugal**

**14-16 November 2012**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Dear colleagues,

This report summarizes the most important activities and events directly related to the Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission occurred since the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting, held in Accra, Ghana, in November 2010. Some of these matters are not expanded here, since they will also be discussed in detail during the meeting.

#### **1. Outcomes of the XVIII International Hydrographic Conference**

The eighteenth International Hydrographic Conference took place last April, in Monaco.

After more than seven and a half years since the approval of the amendments to the Convention of the International Hydrographic Organization, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (in April 2005), the number of Member State Governments who have ratified the Protocol of Amendments is still below the required number for its entry into force.

The Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group (MSDI) in its report to the Conference referred to the key role of the Capacity Building Sub-Committee (CBSC) and the Regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHC) in assisting States to contribute to MSDI through education of both developing and developed Member States on the

benefits of SDI. This rising issue will also be addressed Conference with a dedicated presentation highlighting the importance of Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure.

The Conference assigned IHB, with the support of the RHC and CBSC, the development of a new framework to enhance C-55 publication for the input, presentation and assessment of the survey and nautical cartography status with the main aim of assisting and improving the collection, quality and availability of hydrographic data world-wide.

The Conference agreed to approve the minor updates on the main text of Resolution 1/1997 as amended - *The WEND Principles*, as per the text at Annex A of the WEND-WG Report to the XVIII International Hydrographic Conference and to refer Annexes B and C of the same Report back to the WEND-WG for further consideration, namely:

- invite MSs/RHCs to identify ENC gaps and overlaps in their areas and elaborate a program to complete what is still missing, identifying a target date for achievement;
- invite RHCs to identify their regional shortcoming to be able to comply with SOLAS V Regulation 9, i.e. not what they need but what services they are not able to provide;
- define a methodology to monitor coverage and availability of ENC and the priority areas still needed to be covered.

The Conference agreed to amend Resolution 1/2005 as amended - *IHO Response to Disasters*, Section 1 - Introduction and Section 2 a) - Procedures and Guidelines by Member States following the text in the proposal presented by Japan. The IHB was tasked to circulate an improved edited text to Member States through Circular Letter for any comment prior to the publication in M-3.

Besides the participation of the IHO member States from the EAtHC, I may emphasize from our region the participation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guinea as observers of the International Hydrographic Conference.

As chairman of the EAtHC I had the honour to present the RHC report to the Conference.

## **2. New Members**

Cameroon has deposited the instrument of accession to the IHO last May and became its 81<sup>st</sup> Member State. With this adhesion Cameroon also became the 6<sup>th</sup> EAtHC effective Member State.

## **3. Capacity Building**

Since the 11<sup>th</sup> EAtHC Conference, three Capacity Building visits were conducted in our region: to Gabon, Guinea-Bissau and Cameroon.

The arrangements for delivering the basic course in hydrography and cartography, in French, after this Conference (from 19<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December) are underway. This course, sponsored by the International Maritime Organization, will be delivered by the *Service Hydrographique et Oceanographique de la Marine* (SHOM) in the Maritime University of Abidjan. I would like to share with this conference my appreciation to IHB and SHOM for all the efforts they have made to organize the course and particularly to the extensive preparation work carried out by SHOM.

Despite these achievements, I must admit that the last two years have not been successful with regards to the Coastal States involvement and contributions for planning future activities in our Regional Commission. Regrettably, no Capacity Building activities were proposed to the CBSC for the forthcoming five-year period.

I hope that we could profit from the special session on capacity building planned for this meeting, agenda item 8.3, to re-establish and strengthen the capacity building initiatives as a major drive to evaluate and improve capacities either for cartographic production or the dissemination of maritime safety information (MSI) among the States in our region.

## **3. International Chart Catalogue**

France, as coordinator of the International Chart Catalogue of our Regional Hydrographic Commission will deal with the issues regarding this topic under agenda item 8.1, trying to update this Catalogue taking into account all the new charts or modifications to the existing ones occurred since the last update of the CHATINTCHART Catalogue, in September 2009.

#### **4. Outcomes from IHO Committees and Working Groups**

Since the last EAtHC Conference, I had the honour to represent the Commission in two meetings of the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC), the IRCC 3 in Brasil, in May 2011, and the IRCC 4 in Singapore, in June 2012, and to present the EAtHC reports too.

These meetings addressed specifically the activities that might benefit from a regional approach, such as capacity building, training and education; promulgation of radio navigational warnings; general bathymetry and ocean mapping and the implementation of policies related to the World-wide Electronic Navigational Chart Database (WEND). All these matters are identified as strategic objectives of the IHO.

We will return to the IRCC issues under agenda item 5.1.

Besides the IRCC, the EAtHC has also been represented in the World-wide Electronic Navigational Chart Database Working Group (WEND-WG) and the Capacity Building Subcommittee (CBSC). Our representatives will certainly be available to report on the most relevant matters.

On the last CBSC meeting a new chair and vice-chair were elected. As EAtHC chair I would like to congratulate Mr. Olumide Omotoso, from Nigeria, for his appointment as CBSC vice-chair. We hope this relevant position may also stimulate the coastal States in the region to strengthen the cooperation activities on capacity building.

#### **5. Final Remarks and Recommendations**

Based on the resolutions and outcomes of the International Hydrographic Conference, the IHO committees and Working Groups, where EAtHC has participated,

we tried to keep coastal States informed of the relevant information either by Circular Letter or by e-mail from the Secretariat.

As a mean to facilitate communication and display of the relevant and useful information to the EAtHC coastal States, the Portuguese Hydrographic Institute (IHPT) launched, in June 2011, the EAtHC website under its webpage. If the Conference considers appropriate IHPT may provide the maintenance of this page.

Focusing our attention to this Conference, 10 out of the 24 coastal States that belong to this Commission are represented here. From the absent coastal States we received regrets from Cape Verde.

Early this year efforts were made to update the list of EAtHC contacts. However, only 4 EAtHC costal States and 2 observer States responded.

Improving communication is, on my point of view, essential in this region. I am convinced that the capacity building events, either technical visits or training courses, constitute the suitable environment to stimulate the involvement of coastal States in the activities of the Regional Hydrographic Commission.

The forthcoming basic course in hydrography and cartography, in Abidjan, has 11 recipient countries from the EAtHC, 7 of those we have had no contact with, at least, since the last meeting in Accra. Therefore, I leave to the consideration of this forum and to the IHB the suggestion to take this opportunity, and similar ones, to emphasize the importance for coastal States to keep in contact with and take part in the activities of the Regional Hydrographic Commission.

Thank you.