

13th Conference of the Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission

(EAtHC)

Casablanca, Morocco

16-18 September 2014

Chairman's report

1. This report covers the activities of the EAtHC since its conference in Lisbon in November 2012.

General characteristics of the region

2. The area covered by the work of the Commission coincides with the charting region G and NAVAREA II area. Maritime traffic is particularly intense, in the approaches of the English Channel, the North Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. Maritime traffic grows from and to ports in West and Central Africa. Maritime security is an important issue for some areas of the region (Gulf of Guinea in particular), resulting in new requirements for navigation from the coastal States.
3. Hydrography and nautical charting of the region are not completely satisfactory, as revealed by the examination of the IHO publication C55. If all the coastal States in the region are members of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), only seven¹ of them are members of the IHO. The development of hydrographic capability is a priority for this region.

New Members - bilateral agreements

4. Candidatures of Mauritania and Sierra Leone have received the number of votes allowing them to become a member, but the Government of Monaco has not yet received their instrument of accession. The Republic of Congo is preparing to initiate a process.
5. Nine coastal States of the region have signed the statutes of the Commission, and are associate members. Other countries in the region, participating in the work of the Commission as observers, are encouraged to sign up the statutes.
6. Five coastal States in the region have bilateral arrangements with other States concerning the provision of hydrographic services as defined by the Regulation V/9 of the SOLAS convention.

Activities since the last conference of the EAtHC (October 2012 - Lisbon)

Corporate Affairs

7. Cooperation with the European Commission - the EU initiatives in the maritime sector have a growing influence on the hydrographic activity of member States. The IHO has recognized its importance, for example with regard to standardization, improved hydrographic knowledge of

¹ Including one suspended member

European waters, role of hydrography in European policies, including in the field of international cooperation. Under the MoU signed in 2012 by the IHO and the European Commission at the XVIII International Hydrographic Conference, a working group, originally created as part of the North Sea Hydrographic Commission, has been enlarged, and placed under the inter-regional coordination committee (IRCC) of the IHO. It was agreed that France will represent EAtHC to this "network IHO-EU" (circular letter EAtHC No. 03/2014, dated 29/04/2014).

8. Concerning the International Maritime Organization (IMO), it should be noted the merger of two subcommittees concerned with hydrography, COMSAR and NAV, replaced by the NCSR subcommittee (Navigation, Communication, Search & Rescue). **The attention of members, associate members and observer States of EAtHC is drawn to the audit program of IMO members States, the scope of which includes the hydrographic capabilities.** The audit shall include (see resolution A.1067 (28) IMO) the measures taken by the coastal State to: promulgate navigational warnings and dangers to navigation; manage how information relating to aids to navigation is promulgated; provide hydrographic services (see SOLAS V / 9); and evaluate the effectiveness of the foregoing. It should be noted that five coastal States of the EAtHC region are among the top six in the rank order of the audit schedule, and seven (eight with the addition of Angola) are in the top 16 (see document EAtHC13-07.7A).
9. At the previous conference of the EAtHC, it was decided to use the channel of the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) to encourage coastal States of this area to develop provisions to meet the obligations of SOLAS Regulation V/9. A contact was established with the Secretary General of the organization, by exchange of letters, and with the support of the Republic of Congo, who is vice-chair of MOWCA, focusing in particular on capacity building (see §24).
10. With regard to the performance indicators of the IHO, we note that:
 - 12 coastal States in the region provide, directly or indirectly, hydrographic services, including ENC;
 - 60% of the concerned States have attended the previous conference EAtHC. 10 non-Member States are announced at the Casablanca Conference, an increased number compared to the previous conference;
 - Coverage requirements for Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) is 100% fulfilled for usage bands 1 and 2, more than 85% for band 3, and over 95% for bands 4, 5 and 6. These rates should not hide that hydrographic data from which those ENC are compiled may be old and incomplete on the African coast (see § 27).
11. On the 1st of September, 11 members, associate members and observer States of the EAtHC were registered for the next Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference, from the 6th to the 10th of October 2014 (see document EAtHC13-03A). Other stakeholders to EAtHC are encouraged to consider their participation.

Hydrographic Services and Standards

12. The next meeting of the HSSC will be held in Valparaiso, Chile. In addition to numerous technical issues (see http://iho.int/mtg_docs/com_wg/HSSC/HSSC6/HSSC6Docs.htm), the evolution of the structure of the working groups of this committee will be discussed.

Inter-regional Coordination and Support

13. EAtHC chairman have represented EAtHC to the meetings of the inter-regional coordination committee (IRCC) of the IHO in 2013 (Wollongong) and in 2014 (Paris). The works of the IRCC during these two years have resulted in:

- Revision of the publication B6 (normalization of the names of subsea structures);
- Amendment of the resolution 1/2005 of the IHO related to the response to marine disasters, to take into account the contribution of tidal observatories networks to the coastal flooding warning systems;
- Development of the draft revision of the capacity building strategy of the IHO (cf.§19)
- Establishment of a working group to liaise with the European Commission (cf.§7);
- Validation of revised standards of competence for hydrographic surveyors and cartographers, and the programme of work for a new edition of these standards (see §20);
- Progress on the implementation of the principles for the development of the Worldwide Electronic Nautical Charts Database (WEND) (cf. § 14);
- Highlighting the interest of risk analysis to prioritize hydrographic surveys;
- Initial assessment of "unconventional methods" for the collection of hydrographic data (satellite derived bathymetry, crowd-sourcing); **the regional commissions are asked to consider them for their area of interest;**
- Proposed transfer of the Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group (MSDIWG) from HSSC to IRCC;
- Identifying a need to facilitate access of hydrographic offices with charting responsibilities on the waters under the jurisdiction of other States, to hydrographic surveys executed in these waters by others.

14. As confirmed at the 12th conference of the EAtHC, the coordinator of international charting schemes for the region G (G-ICCWG), has represented EAtHC to the third and fourth meetings of the WEND working group. These meetings have allowed progress on the WEND guidelines, as well as on the definition of a procedure for handling overlaps between ENC.

15. Coordination of the dissemination of information on maritime security in the area Navarea II. This activity is the subject of a specific report (EAtHC13-07.4A report). If the status of Navtex stations has improved, the list of national contacts for Navarea II is still incomplete, complicating the task of the Navarea coordinator. The creation of a common web portal could likely facilitate the

updating of these points of contact, while providing the capability to report information on maritime safety in a collaborative and responsive manner.

16. The growth of offshore oil & gas operations in the Gulf of Guinea requires regular monitoring of the location of exploration and exploitation platforms. Information is provided occasionally by some coastal States.
17. The participation of representatives of industry at the EAtHC conferences is effective since the 12th conference. It participates to the understanding of hydrographic problems of the region and allows the exchange of complementary points of view on the actions to be taken.

Capacity Building

18. The diversity of maritime issues and the variety of needs met by hydrography and nautical charting necessitate close coordination of the different administrations in the prioritization and implementation of hydrographic programmes. To this end, the IHO recommends the establishment of national hydrographic committees. **The 13th conference of the EAtHC is an opportunity to review the establishment of such committees.**
19. The coordinator of capacity building has participated in two meetings of the Capacity Building Sub-Committee (see report CBSC12-05C released by mail on May 12, 2014 and available on the IHO website at http://iho.int/mtg_docs/com_wg/CBC/CBSC12/CBSC12-05C-EAtHC_report.pdf). Besides the development and monitoring of the IHO Capacity Building annual programmes, the review of the strategy of the IHO in this area has been a main focus of both meetings (see document EAtHC13-08.1A).
20. The FIG-IHO-ICA International Board on Standards of Competence (IBSC) has revised the standards for the training of surveyors and cartographers. The main changes relate to:
 - E.learning;
 - Recommendations for practical exercises and field training;
 - Minimum duration of training;

A study has started on the possibility of individual certification schemes, to guarantee maintenance of skills over time.

21. Following a decision taken at the 12th conference of the EAtHC, a survey was carried out on the training needs of the coastal States of West and Central Africa, as well as on training facility. Results will be presented by the coordinator for capacity building at the 13th conference of the EAtHC. The importance of developing regional capacity training has been discussed several times, at the 12th conference of the EAtHC and at the seminary of Pointe-Noire in November 2013 (see §24). **Two orientations seem to emerge, on which it would be helpful to have the views of the commission:**
 - Need to train hydrographer-assistants, to leverage the potential trained at the B and A level;

- Interest of having an English speaking training centre and a French speaking one (the question of a Portuguese speaking centre is to be considered with the SAIHC).
22. A high-level visit to Liberia is envisaged, following contacts between this State and the IHB.
23. To assist in the assessment of the importance of hydrography in the development of the maritime economy, two high-level seminars on aids to navigation, hydrography and nautical charting were jointly organized by the IMO, IHO and IALA for the benefit of officials responsible for implementing the safety of navigation:
- Nouakchott (Mauritania) in September 2013 (French speaking seminar);
 - Accra (Ghana) in April 2014 (English speaking seminar).
24. In November 2013, the Republic of Congo and MOWCA held in Pointe-Noire a high-level seminar on hydrography, with the participation of a director of IHB and EAtHC chairman (see report 010 SHOM/DMI/REX, dated 6 May 2014, transmitted by LC EAtHC 4/2014, dated 14 May 2014). The main conclusions drawn by the Minister for the merchant navy of the Republic of Congo and the Secretary General of the MOWCA were:
- The benefit for member States of MOWCA to join the IHO;
 - The need to create an appropriate training sector, relying on a network of the regional academies of MOWCA;
 - The decision to prepare an agreement on cooperation between IHO and MOWCA.

Coordination of Global Surveying and Charting

25. A partial update of the IHO publication C-55 "status of hydrographic surveying and nautical charting worldwide" is underway on the basis of the elements provided by the end of June 2014. For some areas, this status has not been updated since 2004. IHB also has undertaken a renovation of the C-55, to be integrated into an IHO geographic information system (GIS).
26. The progress of coverage with modern surveys is slow in a large part of the region. Coastal States are encouraged to identify the surveys done by other organizations in waters under their jurisdiction and to consider the communication of the results to the charting authorities, for the benefit of all mariners. To include in the authorization of survey an information procedure and a communication procedure of the survey results would be likely to facilitate the inclusion of these results in nautical documents.
27. The progress of international charting coverage in the region G (paper and electronic) is addressed in a specific report (see document EAtHC13-07.1A). The charting coordinator for the region is invited to consider the specifications of the IHO GIS "INToGIS" when available, to propose to EAtHC members the adjustments necessary to make the most of this GIS regarding maintenance of the chart catalogues of region G.
28. The ENC coverage in region G continues to improve. Since the 12th EAtHC conference, over 48 new cells were produced on the region G (usage bands 4 and 5). Dissemination of ENC in the past

two years has improved through the convergence of licensing rules of both Regional ENC Centres (RENCs). All existing ENCs on the area are provided through RENCs.

Ocean Mapping Programme

29. Ocean mapping in the region takes benefit of measurements which may be carried out by transiting survey vessels, with the authorization of the coastal States in respect of their exclusive economic zone; this practice should be encouraged. Among the sea bed structures recently unveiled in the region, it is brought to the attention of EAtHC that one, discovered in October 2013 at 21°01'11 N and 21°15',46 W, has been named in 2014 Sea Mount *Michel Le Gouic*, in honour of an hydrographer disappeared in early 2013, and whose contribution to the work of the IHO, and particularly of the EAtHC, is in everyone's memory.

Perspectives

30. It is proposed that capacity building be a priority of the EAtHC in the coming years. To this end, and in support of the 5-years plan requested by the capacity building subcommittee of the IHO, the subcommittee approved at its last meeting the principle of a scoping study to develop a detailed programme for the years to come, and to determine how to fund it; this project must be refined before final approval, **and it is proposed to the commission to review and complete it at the 13th conference.**
31. The awareness of the importance of geographical data in Africa, and the role of satellite observation in their collection, incite to explore possibilities for sharing skills and tools between hydrography and land geography. In November, the 11th plenary session, in Libreville (Gabon), of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO), members of which are several EAtHC members and observers, is an opportunity to address this issue.
32. The 5th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference in Monaco in October 2014 will be an opportunity to discuss important issues regarding the development of hydrography, both under technical aspects and in terms of capacity building (see document 13 EAtHC -03A). **EAtHC members and observers are invited to participate, and to prepare for discussion of EIHC-5 items at the 13th conference of the EAtHC.**

Conclusion – Actions for EAtHC

33. Members, associates members and observers EAtHC are invited to:
- Note this report;
 - Make additions as may be necessary;
 - Take any other action as deemed appropriate.