

**39<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE ANTARCTIC TREATY CONSULTATIVE MEETING**  
**SANTIAGO, CHILE,**  
**23-27 MAY 2016**

The 39<sup>th</sup> Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) took place in Santiago, Chile from 23 to 27 May 2016. The IHO is an invited expert organization and was represented at the meeting by Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA, former Hydrographer of Chile and former IHB Director with specific responsibility for the Antarctic region.

The meeting was opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Mr. Heraldo Muñoz accompanied by senior officers from the Chilean Ministry of Defence. The session was attended by over 400 people representing 53 countries and eight international organizations including the IHO.



Heads of Delegations and Observer Organizations at the Opening Ceremony.

In the opening session the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile highlighted that ATCM was the most important international meeting related to the Antarctic continent. He noted that the meeting provided the opportunity to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Madrid Protocol that deals with Antarctic environmental protection as well as 100 years since the Chilean expedition by Pardo Pilot to rescue the 22 members of Sir Ernest Shackleton's British expedition who were stranded but survived in Antarctica for two years.

At the first plenary session, Captain Gorziglia presented the IHO report on the status of hydrographic surveys and nautical cartography in the Antarctic region. He highlighted the role being played by the IHO Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) and its members, as well as the contribution being made by different international organizations in order to support activities in Antarctica.

He drew attention to the limited availability of reliable charts of the sea areas and the underlying fact that very little depth data existed for the Antarctic region. He suggested that all vessels entering Antarctic waters should be invited to gather depth data using their existing equipment. This collected data should then be forwarded to the Hydrographic Offices responsible for producing the nautical charts and supporting bathymetric maps of the region.

After the plenary session, the meeting was split into two Working Groups. There were several matters of interest to the IHO discussed in the second Working Group that dealt with science, operations and tourism. Five Information Papers (IP) provided information directly relevant to the IHO and the HCA:

- IP 37 Search and Rescue (SAR) Initiatives Affecting Antarctica (USA)
- IP 50 Colombia contribution to Maritime Safety in Antarctica (Colombia)
- IP 68 Russian hydrographic studies in the Southern Ocean in the season 2015-2016 (Russian Federation)
- IP 97 CHILE - SHOA Cooperation in the production on Nautical Charts in Antarctica Area (2010- 2020 Program) (Chile)
- IP 109 XVIII Combined Antarctic Naval Patrol 2015-2016 (Argentina-Chile)

During the discussions in the Working Group Captain Gorziglia suggested that it would be useful to examine in much more detail the impact of the unacceptable state of hydrographic surveys and nautical charting covering Antarctic waters, particularly in relation to safety, operations and research in the region.

Captain Gorziglia proposed that the IHO could be invited to deliver a seminar on the status of hydrography in the Antarctic, similar as the one organized by the IHO at the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the ATCM held in Ukraine in 2008. Chile and Ecuador supported this proposal. This resulted in the Working Group agreeing to include a new priority item in its work programme relating to hydrographic surveying in Antarctica, and to consider the issue in 2018.

To implement this initiative, a Working Paper should be submitted by one or several Antarctic Treaty Member States for consideration by the 40<sup>th</sup> ATCM in 2017, introducing the theme and inviting the IHO to deliver such a seminar at the 41<sup>st</sup> ATCM in 2018. Members of the IHO HCA, all of whom are States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, are the obvious candidates to take the lead in supporting this important opportunity. Accordingly, this will be discussed during the forthcoming meeting of the HCA in Tromsø, Norway in late June.

The documents of the meeting are available through the ATCM website at [http://www.ats.aq/devAS/ats\\_meetings.aspx?lang=e](http://www.ats.aq/devAS/ats_meetings.aspx?lang=e).