

**Report
of the
3rd Conference of the
Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico Hydrographic Commission**

Fort-de-France - Martinique

20 - 24 April 1998

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3rd Conference of the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico Hydrographic Commission

Summary Record of Discussions

1. OPENING SESSION

The Conference was attended by delegates from the following countries and organizations:

- Member States of the IHO in the Region: Cuba, France, Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States;
- other Coastal States in the Region: Colombia, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia;
- Observer: Canada;
- International Organization: International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB).

The list of participants is provided at CGMHC 3/01/02.

Apologies had been received from Barbados, Bahamas (Department of Lands and Surveys), Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

Captain Michel Bec, French Naval Commander for the West Indies, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the French Government and Navy (see Annex 1). Captain Andrew Armstrong of the United States Office of Coast Survey thanked Captain Bec and welcomed the delegates as current Chairman of the Commission (see Annex 2). He turned over the chair of the Commission to France and Ingénieur général François Milard, who gave an opening address (see Annex 3).

Item 1 - Administrative Details

France outlined the administrative details. The list of documents is at CGMHC 3/01/01 and the programme of events is at CGMHC 3/01/03.

Item 2 - Approval of Agenda

The draft agenda circulated before the Conference was adopted (see CGMHC 3/02/01).

2. 1ST PLENARY SESSION

Item 3 - Review of actions from the second Conference of CGMHC

Under item 3 of the agenda, the actions from the 2nd Conference were reviewed. The Conference noted that all actions had been completed.

Item 4 - Review and modification of the Commission Statutes

The Conference reviewed the Statutes of the Commission, in order to implement IHO Administrative Resolution T 1.3 adopted at the XVth International Hydrographic Conference. A draft revision had been prepared by the IHB and then modified by UK. Cuba noted that the latest version had been circulated too late to be discussed at this stage and Jamaica concurred. The Netherlands suggested to postpone the discussion until the next day. The Chairman explained that the main changes were limited in scope and offered to explain them. The main

issue dealt with the rights of Associate Members defined in article 2. The UK had suggested that Associate Members should have the right to host the Conference. The USA was not supportive. Jamaica believed that Associate Members should have the right to host and chair the Conference. France felt that the two issues should be dissociated: the Chairmanship of an IHO body could only be vested in an IHO Member State, but France did not object to a non-IHO Member State hosting the Conference. The IHB supported that approach which was agreed by the Conference. After reviewing the other proposed changes, the Conference agreed to form a drafting group chaired by the UK with participants from Colombia, Cuba, France, Haiti, Jamaica, Haiti, Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, USA, and IHB. The group was tasked to report to the Conference by the next day.

Item 5 - Status of IHO membership and recent developments of IHB

The representative of the IHB reviewed the status of IHO membership and recent developments of the IHO (see document CGMHC 3/05/01). UK made a plea for greater involvement by Associate Members of the CGMHC in the work of the Commission so that they could see advantages in IHO membership. The IHB clarified the IHO accession process.

Item 6 - Report on IHO strategic planning process

The IHB summarized the work of the IHO Strategic Planning Working Group and presented the IHO Draft Strategic Plan 1997-2002 and Business Plan 1998 at CGMHC 3/06/01. One of the outcome of the work was the requirement that Regional Hydrographic Commissions and their Chairman should play a more active role within the IHO. The IHB suggested actions which should be considered by the Commission:

- adoption and implementation of the INT chart scheme for the Region,
- assessment of the status of surveys in the Region,
- implementation of GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress and Safety Service),
- assessment of requirements to improve hydrographic capabilities in the Region,
- raising the awareness of the importance of hydrography,
- production of a newsletter.

The UK referred to its task to analyze the skill gaps within the IHB and asked for contribution from the participants. France felt that it was more important to address concrete actions such as the assessment of surveys and the implementation of GMDSS than to devote resources to producing a newsletter. The USA offered to contribute to the compilation of existing surveys. It was agreed that the issue would be revisited after the presentation of the national reports.

Saint Lucia indicated its interest for the objective "international public voice for hydrographic matters". It felt a pressing need of a mechanism to convince government of less developed countries that hydrography is important. The IHB explained the general mechanisms of technical assistance and stressed that it was essential that nations initiate the process and request assistance from appropriate organizations. Trinidad and Tobago stated that it was necessary to identify the benefits that governments could expect from investments in hydrography, especially in financial terms. IHB referred to the draft revised version of IHO Information Paper No 12 included in its written contribution (see document CGMHC 3/05/01 - Annex 4).

Item 7 - Summaries and discussion of written reports from the Members

The representatives of States in the Region provided a verbal report.

a/ Netherlands

See document CGMHC 3/07/01.

3. 2ND PLENARY SESSION

Item 7 - Summaries and discussion of written reports from the Members (continued)

b/ Colombia

See document CGMHC 3/07/02.

Answering a question from France, Colombia indicated that assistance from other HOs in the Region such as Chile and Peru and from international organizations was being sought to progress in the implementation of GMDSS.

c/ Cuba

See document CGMHC 3/07/03.

Answering questions from the IHB, Cuba indicated that the Directorate of Maritime Inspection and Safety of the Ministry of Transport represents Cuba at IMO and that Geocuba is a group of State enterprises within the national hydrographic organization. They have management autonomy but implement the directives from Direccion de Hidrografia y Geodesia.

d/ Grenada

Grenada indicated that nautical charting responsibilities are still held by UK. The Port Authority which is responsible for most marine related activities has started investigating hydrographic requirements.

Answering questions from Saint Lucia and UK, Grenada indicated that the Land Survey Division is only involved in land mapping up to the shoreline and that funding is not yet available to develop hydrographic capabilities.

e/ Guyana

There is little hydrographic surveying work due to lack of adequate means. Some progress is expected following the recent procurement of modern data acquisition and processing equipment. There are requirements for specialized training.

Answering a question from the IHB, Guyana indicated that updating information to Light Lists and Tide Tables are handled by UK.

f/ Haiti

See document CGMHC 3/07/04.

Answering a question from the IHB, Haiti indicated that the Ministry of Transport is well aware of the need for hydrography but that there is a lack of resources.

g/ Jamaica

See document CGMHC 3/07/05.

h/ Saint Lucia

See document CGMHC 3/07/06.

i/ Trinidad and Tobago

See document CGMHC 3/07/07.

Answering a question from the IHB, Trinidad and Tobago mentioned its interest in promoting regional cooperation through a sub-regional centre.

j/ United Kingdom

See document CGMHC 3/07/08.

The written report was complemented by a brief description of the South China Sea Project and of the status of bilateral arrangements. The UKHO is implementing bilateral arrangements with HOs in other countries and with UK Port Authorities.

Answering a question from the USA, the UK indicated that ENC distribution and pricing structure are still under discussion within the Northern European RENC.

4. WORKING GROUP SESSIONS

Item 8 - Working Group sessions

The Working Groups met under the chairmanship of Canada (Training), USA - NIMA (International charts) and USA - Coast Survey (Electronic charts).

Item 4 - Review and modification of the Commission Statutes (continued)

A drafting group met under the chairmanship of UK to produce a revised version of the Statutes.

5. 3RD PLENARY SESSION

Item 7 - Summaries and discussion of written reports from the Members (end)

k/ United States

See documents CGMHC 3/07/09 and 3/07/10.

Answering questions from Cuba and Jamaica, USA (Coast Survey) elaborated on the print on demand (POD) process. Typical chart printing times are 8 minutes with an inkjet plotter and 2 to 3 minutes with an electrostatic plotter. The latter one is more expensive and requires air conditioning. The process is still in the development stage and it is not yet envisioned to abandon the use of films and presses. Canada mentioned its own experience. It considers as a rule of thumb that POD techniques are economical for print run of less than 100 copies.

Answering a question from UK, USA (CNMOC) elaborated on hydrographic training at the University of Mississippi. The US Navy has agreed to send 8 students per year. The cost is expected to be 14 000 US dollars per student. PhD and Masters degrees are also available in maritime sciences.

/ France

See documents CGMHC 3/07/11.

Concluding the national presentations, the Chairman identified two issues which required the attention of the Commission:

- the status of hydrographic surveys in the Region,
- the implementation of GMDSS.

Referring to the GMDSS issue, USA (NIMA) presented the report of the last meeting of the IHO Commission on Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings (CPRNW - see document CGMHC 3/07/12) and reminded the Conference that the implementation of GMDSS should be finalized by 1st February 1999. The CPRNW had also discussed the distribution of Notices to Mariners on the Internet and had concluded that the legal aspect required further investigation from the IHO Legal Advisory Committee (LAC). IHB indicated that the maritime safety information (MSI) segment of GMDSS was simple. It only required to identify a national coordinator who could collect the relevant information and transmit them by fax to the NAVAREA IV Coordinator.

To progress the issues, the Chairman introduced two draft decisions which were discussed, amended and approved (see decisions 3/1 and 3/2).

Item 4 - Review and modification of the Commission Statutes (continued)

The Chairman introduced the three versions (English, French, Spanish) of the draft revised Statutes prepared by the drafting group. UK briefly discussed the main changes which had been agreed by the drafting group:

- to accommodate the situation of IHO membership in the Region, it was recommended to separate out the election of the Chairman (IHO Member) and the location of the Conference;
- a clearer distinction was recommended between Full Members and Associate Members.

The participants were invited to review the draft Statutes and sign the membership form.

6. 4TH PLENARY SESSION

Item 4 - Review and modification of the Commission Statutes (end)

The revised Statutes in document CGMHC 3/04/02 were approved. The following countries completed the signature form:

- Full members: Cuba, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States;
- Associate members: Colombia, Guyana, Haiti.

The other participants were invited to register their membership by correspondence to the Chairman.

Item 9 - Reports of the Working Groups

a/ Training

Canada provided a summary of the Training Working Group Report (see document CGMHC 3/09/01).

IHB complemented the presentation with a review of funding processes for technical assistance through national aid agencies, multinational, and international organizations such as the European Commission, the United Nations, the Global Environment Facility, and the World Bank (see document CGMHC 3/05/01). The status of the revision of IHO Special Publication S-55 (status of hydrographic surveys) was discussed. Countries who had not yet done so were invited to respond to the questionnaire circulated with IHO Circular Letter 21/1995. The training curriculum of the International Maritime Academy in Trieste was outlined.

b/ INT charts

USA (NIMA) reported on the work of the International Chart Working Group (see document CGMHC 3/09/02). UK thanked Rear Admiral Christian Andreasen, WG Chairman, for the speed with which he had addressed the issue in a short time and expected further work to continue as speedily. The Conference Chairman associated himself with the appreciation expressed by UK and commended Cuba about its positive contribution to the INT scheme. In accepting to produce INT charts which do not fit its national charting scheme, Cuba sets a very good example. The acceptance by Colombia was also noted in that there were also significant differences from its national scheme.

Referring to the recommendations of the WG, the Chairman offered a draft decision on the revision of the limit between INT Regions B and C1. The Commission considered comments from UK, Jamaica, and USA and agreed decision 3/3.

7. 5TH PLENARY SESSION

Item 9 - Reports of the Working Groups (end)

c/ Electronic charts

USA (Coast Survey) reported on the work of the Electronic Chart Working Group (see document CGMHC 3/09/03). Two draft decisions related with electronic charts were introduced and discussed. The Commission considered comments from Netherlands and USA (NIMA) and agreed decisions 3/4 and 3/5.

Item 10 - Status of IMO issues pertaining to hydrography

IHB introduced this item, referring to Annex 5 of its written contribution (see document CGMHC 3/05/01). It discussed the relations between IHO and IMO, joint projects in technical cooperation and assistance, and the revision of SOLAS. It concluded that IHO is a technical organization which supports in specific domains the activities of IMO.

Commenting the revision of SOLAS, France suggested that the Conference expresses its support to the IHB initiative to propose a draft UN resolution on the provision of hydrographic services and register its opposition to the Italian recommendation to IMO Maritime Safety Committee introducing the notion of "approved" charts. Netherlands and Cuba supported France suggestions. Two draft decisions were prepared, discussed and agreed (see decisions 3/6 and 3/7).

Item 11 - Status of WEND /distribution of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) in the Region

The Chairman noted that this item had been addressed by the Electronic Charting Working Group and referred the Commission to decision 3/4.

Item 12 - Status of the International Bathymetric Chart of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico (IBCCA) Project

France summarized the written report provided by IOC (see document CGMHC 3/12/01). Cuba indicated that the sheets 1-07 and 1-08 had been completed and submitted to the Editorial Board. France added that a meeting of the Editorial Board was planned later in 1998.

8. CLOSING SESSION

Item 13 - Other business

The Chairman asked the views of the participants about the IHB suggestion to produce a Commission newsletter. France suggested to wait for further progress of the Training and Electronic Charting Working Groups. The Commission agreed.

Item 14 - Observer comments

The Chairman invited Canada to comment on the Conference work. Canada indicated its appreciation to be part of the Commission and its hope to continue to support its work. It noted that it is rewarding to see the Commission growing and working but that efforts are still required to develop hydrography in the Caribbean and to shift some resources towards it.

Item 15 - Location and date of next Conference

UK offered to be considered as next Chairman and to host the 4th Conference. UK suggested Kingston (Jamaica) as the likely venue. The Commission agreed this proposal and decided to hold the 4th Conference in April 2000.

Item 16 - Closing remarks

The Chairman noted that the participation in the work of the Commission had grown with 12 States in the Region present. However, 14 other States were not represented. The seven decisions of the Conference had identified actions which are important for the future and for the development of hydrography in the Region. Much work remains to be done. The Chairman thanked the delegates for their assiduity and active participation in the discussions. He hoped that they had enjoyed Martinique as much as we will enjoy Jamaica in 2000.

USA thanked the Chairman on behalf of the delegates. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the interpreters and secretariat.

3rd Conference of the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico Hydrographic Commission

List of decisions

DECISION No 3/1

Assessment of hydrographic surveys in the Region

The Hydrographic Commission of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, during its 3rd Conference in Fort-de-France (April 1998)

Affirming the importance of a knowledge as precise as possible of the status of hydrographic surveys completed in the Region,

Considering the offer of the United States to compile the existing hydrographic surveys in the Region,

Noting the classification of surveys adopted for the revision of Special Publication S-55 of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO),

Invites countries of the Region to establish an inventory of the surveys available in their maritime area, using the following classification :

a/ depths less than 200 m :

- A : area adequately surveyed, in compliance with the specifications of the current edition of IHO Publication S-44
- B : resurvey required area
- C : unsurveyed area

b/ depths greater than 200 m :

- A : area surveyed with multibeam echosounders providing full bottom coverage,
- B : area covered by non exhaustive regular surveys at scale larger than or equal to 1:1 000 000
- C : other area

and to send this inventory to the United States Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command¹ before the end of 1998.

Invites the United States to compile these information and to report to the Chairman of the Commission before the end of 1999.

¹ Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command
1020 Balch Boulevard
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-5005
USA

DECISION No 3/2

Implementation of GMDSS

The Hydrographic Commission of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, during its 3rd Conference in Fort-de-France (April 1998)

Noting the need to ensure that the GMDSS provision for the promulgation of coastal radio navigational warnings is fully implemented and operational by 1st February 1999,

Recalling the guidelines provided in the relevant IMO and IHO documents,

Invites all the countries in the Region to review their national arrangements and plans accordingly, in consultation with the coordinator of NAVAREA IV.

DECISION No 3/3

Modification of the limit between INT Regions B and C1

The Hydrographic Commission of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, during its 3rd Conference in Fort-de-France (April 1998)

Noting the participation of Guyana in the works of the Commission and its close links with other countries of the Region,

Invites the Coordinator of INT Chart Region B :

(i) to liaise with the Coordinator of INT Chart Region C1 to effect the inclusion of the coast of Guyana in INT Chart Region B,

(ii) to advise the IHO Chart Standardization Committee and the IHB accordingly.

DECISION No 3/4

Study of the implementation of the WEND Scheme

The Hydrographic Commission of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, during its 3rd Conference in Fort-de-France (April 1998)

Mindful of the need to expedite production of an ENC database for the Region, and

Recognizing the value of coordination of ENC standards, production, distribution, and updating, in accordance with the principles of WEND,

Invites the Electronic Chart Working Group to conduct an intersessional meeting to address these matters,

Recommends that the meeting be held within one year from the time of this Conference at a location to be determined by the Working Group Chairman,

further recommends that the deliberations and recommendations of the Working Group be reported to the Fourth Conference of the CGMHC.

DECISION No 3/5

Support of RCDS Appendix to the ECDIS Performance Standards

The Hydrographic Commission of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, during its 3rd Conference in Fort-de-France (April 1998)

Noting the limited availability of ENCs at this time,

and mindful of the need to meet the present demand for electronic charts with official data,

strongly supports the proposed Amendment to IMO Resolution A. 817(19) to add a new Appendix 7 pertaining to the use of ECDIS in the RCDS mode of operation when ENCs are not available,

further recommends that Members advise their respective maritime administrations of the same with a view to approval at NAV 44.

DECISION No 3/6

MSC Note by Italy on "approved" nautical charts

The Hydrographic Commission of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, during its 3rd Conference in Fort-de-France (April 1998)

Considering the note submitted by Italy to the 69th session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee on the definition of official nautical charts,

Noting IMO resolution A.817(19) on the performance standards for ECDIS, which provides for prior consultation of IHO on any proposed amendments,

Expresses its opposition to the content of the Italian note,

Invites the IHB to request IMO that the matter be referred by Italy to the IHO,

Invites Hydrographic Offices in the Region to advise their national maritime administrations of the Commission Members' Decision.

DECISION No 3/7

Proposed resolution to the United Nations on the provision of hydrographic services

The Hydrographic Commission of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, during its 3rd Conference in Fort-de-France (April 1998)

Recognizing the importance of the draft SOLAS regulation V/9 on the provision of adequate world-wide hydrographic services,

strongly supports the IHB initiative to submit a joint IHO-IMO proposal to the United Nations regarding the above regulation, and

Invites Hydrographic Offices in the Region to request their national administrations to support this initiative.