

## **MESO AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION PRESENTATION TO 14<sup>TH</sup> MACHC MEETING**

It is my privilege to bring you greetings and best wishes on behalf of Mr. Koji Sekimisu, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), for this 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MESO American and Caribbean Hydrographic Commission.

This report contains an update on the work of IMO on hydrographic related matters out of the meetings of the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV) and also includes matters out of the 28th Session of the IMO Assembly, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Technical Co-operation Committee (TCC) and developments in the Region.

### **1 Restructuring of IMO Sub-Committees**

Firstly, touching on the restructuring of Sub-Committees at IMO, it is the advent of multi-functional navigation and radiocommunications equipment, which are virtually all computer software based, that has allowed the Maritime Safety Committee to amalgamate the work of the COMSAR and NAV Sub-Committees into the new subsidiary body Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) as part of the restructuring of the sub-committees and a reduction in their number from 9 to 7 – a decision endorsed by the Council. It is anticipated that this will maximize the efficiency of the operational work undertaken by the Committee, taking into account that communication-related matters are essential for both navigation and SAR operations. This would also eliminate the need for the same operational issues to be considered by two different technical bodies, often comprising of the same delegates, and result in outputs being completed in a shorter time frame.

Although a challenging task it is the belief of the Secretary General that all delegates attending NCSR meetings will be capable of meeting this challenge and the expectations of not only the industry, but also of the mariners who man and operate ships worldwide.

### **2 Agreement of Cooperation with IHO**

With a view to reflecting the long-standing cooperation between the IMO and IHO, at the request of the President of the IHO Directing Committee, the Council, at its 110th session, decided, rather than continuing to rely on the 1963 Assembly resolution A.64(III), and to providing a clear framework for future work, approved a proposed Agreement of Cooperation between IMO and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO).

### **3 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the NAV Sub-Committee**

#### **.1 Major Decisions**

Moving to specific matters approved by the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV), the preliminary draft of the Strategy Implementation Plan for e-navigation was endorsed by the Sub-Committee during its 59th session. The e-navigation strategy implementation plan aims to integrate existing and new navigational tools, in particular electronic tools, in an all-embracing transparent, user-friendly, cost-effective and compatible system that will contribute to enhanced navigational safety while simultaneously reducing the burden on the navigator.

The Sub-Committee also endorsed five prioritized potential e-navigation solutions, namely: improved, harmonized and user-friendly bridge design; means for standardized and automated reporting; improved reliability, resilience and integrity of bridge equipment and navigation information; integration and presentation of available information in graphical displays received via communication equipment; and improved communication of vessel traffic services (VTS) Service Portfolio.

Progress was noted by the Sub-Committee in developing draft Guidelines on/for human centred design (HCD) for navigational equipment and systems; usability evaluation of navigational equipment; software quality assurance (SQA); and the harmonization of test beds reporting.

#### **.2 Policy and new symbols for AIS aids to navigation agreed**

The Sub-Committee endorsed a draft MSC circular on the Policy on use of AIS Aids to navigation, which aims to provide mariners and shore authorities, especially Aids to Navigation service providers, a clear policy direction on the use of AIS Aids to Navigation (AtoN) for ensuring the safety of navigation. It includes guidance on performance standards, operation, monitoring, risks and limitations, graphic portrayal and training.

Also agreed was a draft SN Circular on Amended Guidelines for the presentation of navigational-related symbols, terms and abbreviations, for submission to the MSC for approval, to include improved replacement symbols for portrayal of AIS AtoN.

### **.3 Guidance on BNWAS auto function agreed**

The Sub-Committee endorsed a draft MSC circular on Guidance on the Bridge Navigational Watch Alarm System (BNWAS) Auto Function, in order to clarify the use of the automatic mode of operation, for submission to the MSC for approval. The draft circular notes that automatic interface with activation of the ship's heading or track control system is a superfluous function because SOLAS regulation V/19.2.2.3 requires the BNWAS to be in operation whenever the ship is under way at sea.

### **.4 Inadequacy of charts in Polar regions highlighted**

The Sub-Committee agreed, based on the intervention of the IHO that information relating to the lack of adequate hydrographic surveys in nearly 95 per cent of the Polar regions and the status of nautical charting in polar waters be included in the Polar Code, which is being developed by IMO.

## **4 Developments in the Caribbean**

Moving closer to home, the countries of the Caribbean region are dependent to a very large extent on shipping, which not only provides the backbone of trade links, both within the region and with the wider international community, but is also itself an engine for economic growth. Shipping contributes significantly to the tourism sector as more than 45 per cent of world cruise shipping takes place in the Caribbean, with its beautiful beaches, picturesque scenery and generally advantageous climate that provide the major attractions.

We must also remember that the Caribbean is one of the world's great shipping routes. Tonnage heading to or from the Panama Canal inevitably passes through the Caribbean Sea.

All these considerations clearly demonstrate how important it is that the countries of the Caribbean play a full and active part in the regulatory and standard-setting and implementation process that IMO sets in motion for international shipping. Should the region participate fully in the activities of IMO, it will receive full benefit from the international regulatory framework that has brought about such considerable improvements in shipping standards for safety and environmental protection over successive decades.

The ever increasing pressures on the marine environment and the impacts of human activities, for example, shipping, maritime tourism, oil exploration, fishing, and climate change, underscore the continuing importance, globally, of IMO instruments on protection of the marine environment. The particular issues facing the Caribbean Sea, such as the risk associated with increased vessel traffic, the need for search and rescue operations and further cooperation for port State control, the exploration and movement of oil, and the threat of invasive species, reinforce the ever increasing importance of co-operation through activities of IMO in this region and further co-operation for port State control.

To address these challenges, the IMO facilitated a High-Level Symposium on International Maritime Development in the Caribbean Region in February this year for the Ministers responsible for maritime transport and other participants, in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The Symposium adopted the Jamaica 2013 High Level Symposium Resolution in which the Ministers made a commitment to, amongst others, providing adequate hydrographic services for ships navigating in the Caribbean region in accordance with applicable international instruments.

Prior to the High-Level Symposium, the Senior Maritime Administrators identified the technical assistance needs of the region in which twelve (12) of the sixteen (16) countries and territories represented at the meeting identified hydrographic services as an area in which technical assistance was required. A funding allocation of US\$1,600,000 representing approximately 62% of the 2014/2015 Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme funding requirement for the Caribbean was approved at the 28<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

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