

# MACHC Welcomes New Members



The Meso American & Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC) held its 15th meeting in Manzanillo, Mexico, from 10-13 December 2014, during which it welcomed Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Costa Rica as members. The meeting was preceded by the Second Mexican Hydrographic Conference and a Hydrographic Awareness Seminar. The Government of Mexico through the Mexican General Office of Oceanography, Hydrography and Meteorology also organised some Industry Day activities for the delegates.

The MACHC is a Regional Hydrographic Commission (RHC) that supports the activities of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) on a regional basis. The basic activities of the MACHC are conducted by the three primary MACHC Committees, namely:

- MACHC Integrated Chart Committee (MICC)
- Marine Economic Infrastructure Programme (MEIP)
- Capacity Building Committee (CBC)

At the 15th MACHC meeting the Commission welcomed Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Costa Rica as its twelfth and thirteenth Associate Members. On behalf of the Commission the chair, Mr. M. Amafo from Suriname, welcomed both Associate Members to the MACHC and also encouraged other countries in the MACHC region to opt for the associate membership and ultimately, for full MACHC membership by joining the IHO.

The MACHC Statutes, as amended by the 14th Conference of the Commission in Sint Maarten, December 2013, were also approved by the 15th meeting.

The meeting was attended by twelve of the thirteen member States, three Associate members and six other invited countries. In addition, the International Maritime Organization represented by the Regional Maritime Advisor, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (CMOU), the Commission Centro Americana de Transporte Maritimo (COCATRAM) and Panama Canal Authority were in attendance.

On the last day of the meeting The Netherlands and Mexico were elected as the new chair and vice chair for the coming biennium.

The chair noted that the MACHC has achieved significant progress in promoting technical cooperation, capacity building in hydrographic surveying, marine cartography and nautical information, and encouraged the new chair and vice chair to keep working as an effective team in that regard.

In March 2015 Mr. M. Amafo LL.M will officially hand over the chairmanship to Captain Marc van Der Donck. The 16th session of the MACHC meeting is scheduled for December 2015 in Antigua and Barbuda.

*Images: Left: Mr. M. Amafo, Mr. D. Robin, Mr. R. Ward. Right: Mr. M. Amafo, Mr. D. L. Obando, Mr. R. Ward.*