Recent Co-operation
Between the IMO and the IHO

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) co-operate and consult on numerous projects of common interest related to the safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment. This is done primarily under the umbrella of IMO Resolution A.64 (III) of the IMO Assembly 1963, Section IV, paragraph 18(d), which reads:

"Relations with intergovernmental organizations, IHO–CCC"

Maintenance of co-operation and exchange of information on matters of mutual interest, particularly with the International Hydrographic Organization and the Customs Co-operation Council.

A number of recent considerations at the IMO that have involved the IHO are described below.

1. The IMO Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) recommended that five new NAVAREAs should be established and should extend to 90°N. It was also agreed that they should operate on a 24/7 basis and that Canada should be the co-ordinator for NAVAREA XVII and XVIII, Norway for NAVAREA XIX and the Russian Federation for NAVAREAs XX and XXI. These recommendations were subsequently approved by the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at its 83rd Meeting (MSC83) in October 2007. In addition, COMSAR had invited the IHO Committee on the Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings (CPRNW) to review and update the Worldwide Navigation Warning Service (WWNWS) guidance documentation. This was done at the 9th meeting of the CPRNW in September 2007.

2. The IMO Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV) considered the Development of an E-Navigation Strategy at its 53rd Meeting in July 2007. This resulted in the following:

- a definition: E-Navigation is the harmonised collection, integration, exchange, presentation and analysis of maritime information onboard and ashore by electronic means to enhance berth-to-berth navigation and related services, for safety and security at sea, and protection of the marine environment
- a set of core objectives, which includes facilitating safe and secure navigation of vessels having regard to hydrographic, meteorological and navigational information and risks
- it was also concluded that it was premature to discuss the system architecture and conduct a gap analysis before finalising user requirements.

3. In addition to the approval of the COMSAR recommendations described above in paragraph 1, the MSC also decided on a number of other issues with which the IHO has been involved. These included:

- approving a new document on the maintenance of ECDIS software. This was based on an IHO submission to NAV 53
- noting that it was premature to revise the minimum performance standards for ECDIS at this stage
- deciding to submit an Assembly resolution on the need for capacity building to be submitted to the 25th session of the Assembly in November 2007
- placing a new high-priority item in the work programme of NAV and COMSAR for the ‘Development of procedures for updating ship-borne navigation and communication equipment’. Reference was made to the IHO request for an SN Circular on the maintenance of ECDIS software. The work should be completed in 2009 with a report to MSC87 in 2010.

4. At its 57th Technical Co-operation Meeting, the IMO decided to include a number of items directly related to hydrography in its Work Programme. These include:

- Regional ITCP for Africa
  To conduct an assessment and programme of hydrographic survey capacity and marine aids to navigation infrastructure along the African coast
- Regional ITCP Programme for the Caribbean
  The enhancement of safety of navigation through capacity building in various countries aimed at providing improved hydrographic, navigation and safety services.
These work items will involve collaboration with the IHO to assess navigational aids and services infrastructure, and facilitate training to ensure that Caribbean Member States can fulfil their obligations under SOLAS regulations.

Finally, in October 2007, the IHO and IMO, together with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) held a meeting on ‘Capacity Building Effort’. As a result, plans for further co-operation in this field were established. Annual meetings of the three organizations to co-ordinate efforts will be held in future.

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