

# Maritime Information Gaining Importance

The third session of the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) took place in Cambridge, UK, from 24 to 26 July 2013. Over 70 UN Member States were represented at the third session of UN-GGIM together with representatives from nearly 20 international organisations, including the IHO. President Robert Ward represented the IHO.

A number of the agenda items generated discussions that were of relevance to IHO Member States, particularly those that are planning or are already contributing hydrographic data and services to their national spatial data infrastructure.

## **IHO standards well adopted**

The [UN-GGIM Committee](#) reviewed a comprehensive report on the state of global geospatial information standards. The report had been compiled by the [International Organization for Standardisation](#) (ISO) in collaboration with the IHO and the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC). The report noted that while the IHO's hydrographic standards have been universally adopted, the international standards for land-based data were much less well adopted.

## **Lack of underlying geospatial information**

A discussion on integrating land and marine geospatial information was led by a paper presented by Robert Ward. The paper was based on separate submissions from the IHO and the [International Federation of Surveyors](#) (FIG). The paper highlighted the fact that comprehensive international standards exist for geospatial information covering the land and the sea and that work was continuing to enable the underlying data to be interoperable, through such operations as the transformation of datums, particularly vertical datums. For many parts of the world's seas, oceans and coastal waters, there is little or no underlying geospatial information. This fact appeared to be previously unknown by most of the delegates.

## **ISPRS Status should include seas and oceans**

The [International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing](#) (ISPRS) introduced its report on the status of mapping in the world. The ISPRS report only covered land-based mapping. The IHO had not been invited to make a submission on this subject. However, as a result of the other reports and submissions provided by the IHO and the interventions made by the President, the Committee agreed that, in the future, reports on the status of mapping should cover both the world's land mass and the seas, oceans, coastal waters and navigable inland waterways.

## **Sustainable development also in maritime domain**

A UN-GGIM Work Group was formed in 2012 to develop the framework and guidelines for a global map for sustainable development (GM4SD). In order to make this map a reality, each State would be required to make certain layers of information available. At present, work is concentrating on the layers required to support terrestrial urban disaster management, but in future the map may call upon data in the maritime domain.

A report, compiled by a small working group established at the second session of UN-GGIM, covering future trends in national institutional arrangements for geospatial information management was reviewed. The report entitled [Future trends in geospatial information management: the five to ten year vision](#) has been reproduced as a booklet by the UK delegation headed by the UK Ordnance Survey. The report covers five broad themes: trends in technology and the future direction of data creation, maintenance and management; legal and policy developments; skills requirements and training mechanisms; the role of the private and nongovernment sectors; and the future role of governments in geospatial data provision and management.

According to the IHO Report, the growing acknowledgement and awareness by UN-GGIM of the relevance and the potential contribution of hydrographic information in the context of global geospatial data infrastructures is significant. This places relevance on the continuing work of the IHO MSDIWG and its task in assisting Member States in their role as custodians of national hydrographic data sets and their obvious part in national and global spatial data.