

**REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN SEA AND GULF OF MEXICO
HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (CGMHC)
by the Chairman, Dr. W. Wynford WILLIAMS, UK**

1. **Chairman:** Dr. W. Wynford WILLIAMS, UK
2. **Membership:** Colombia, Cuba, France, Jamaica, Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela.

Associate Members: Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Sainte-Lucie

3. **Meetings**

The 3rd CGMHC Conference was held in Fort de France, Martinique, French Antilles 20-24 April 1998.

The 4th CGMHC Conference was held in Kingston, Jamaica, 17-19 April 2000.

4. **Agenda items**

- Review and modification of the Commission Statutes
- Progress of INT charting in the Region, in particular the medium scale scheme
- Implementation of GMDSS in the Region
- Report of International Telecommunications Workshops
- Status of WEND/distribution of ENC in the Region
- Status of hydrographic surveys in the Region
- Report of the Caribbean Study Team
- Status of IHO and CGMHC membership within the region
- International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)
- Status of International Bathymetric Chart of the Caribbean Sea Project

Progress of INT charting in the Region [IHO WP 1 & 3]

Following liaison with the co-ordinator of INT chart region C1, the coast of Guyana has now been included in INT chart region B. A list of ports has been compiled as a possible basis for a large scale INT series. The medium scale INT scheme was approved in principle at the 3rd CGMHC Conference, amended slightly following 4th CGMHC and now awaits promulgation. Allocation of producer nations for all charts is not yet complete. Proposals have been circulated for comment for a small scale 1:1million INT scheme of the Region.

Implementation of GMDSS [IHO WP 1 and 3]

This has been a major initiative for the Commission during the past 5 years. Following the 3rd CGMHC Conference a joint FR/UK Study team was launched to visit nations in order to discuss their plans for implementation of GMDSS before the deadline of February 1999. The Study Team made a valuable contribution to raising awareness of GMDSS issues and its implementation in the Caribbean. Following their visit, four workshops have been held in the Region to discuss National Master Plans and initiate regional harmonisation. At the last workshop in Havana, in May 2000, it was announced that a joint initiative had raised the necessary funding to fit all the Eastern Caribbean States with VHF DSC. Plans are already proceeding to give NAVTEX coverage of the same area but plans for the Western Caribbean still await implementation.

Status of WEND/distribution of ENC in the area [IHO WP 1,2 & 3]

The ENC WG has primarily been concerned with the implementation of WEND in the Region. In 1999, the meeting recommended that, in order to promote ENC production and to encourage early use of ENCs by shipping companies operating in the area, a SHARED type demonstration should be considered for the CGMHC Region. A draft plan was discussed at the 2001 meeting of the WG and Cuba and the USA were appointed as joint plan co-ordinators. In order to promote electronic charting production, a web site has been established containing details of the proposed plan and a record of the last meeting.

Status of hydrographic surveys [IHO WP 1 & 2]

The surveying capacity of Member States in the Region varies widely. Member States were invited to establish an inventory of surveys for their waters for collation by the US. This project awaits additional material before it can be completed.

The Caribbean Study Team [IHO WP 1, 2 and 4]

A joint FR/UK Study Team visited 8 nations with the combined aim of discussing plans for the implementation of GMDSS and making an assessment of national hydrographic capacity. The team identified much potential for regional co-operation, raised the profile of hydrography through contact with key decision makers, assessed national capacity to acquire hydrographic data, offered advice on measures to improve hydrographic capacity and produced a comprehensive report recommending follow up actions.

International Coral Reef Initiative [IHO WP 1 and 3]

The International Coral Reef Initiative was first introduced to the ENC WG through a presentation made at the 1999 meeting. It outlined the need to better protect reefs from damage by maritime activities and considered how improved depiction of coral on charts could contribute to this. As a result a recommendation was made to the Chart Standardisation Committee on the need for uniform depiction of coral on charts. A proposal was also made that inclusion of the Coral Reef Initiative should be an item for other RHC agenda.

Training Working Group [IHO WP 2]

Following the distribution of a questionnaire an attempt was made to collate an analysis of training requirements in the Region. However, although it was clear that training needs were wide and varied, the low response rate made it impossible to fully define training needs. Analysis of the responses received indicated that the most effective methods of delivery of training were the provision of modular training on specific elements and workshop and seminars on specialised equipment and systems – preferably through regional facilities.

Status of the International Bathymetric Chart of the Caribbean & Gulf of Mexico (IBCCA) [IHO WP 1 & 3]

The IBCCA is a regional project of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO with the principal objective of developing a series of bathymetric maps of the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico at scales of 1:1 M and 1: 250,000. A number of sheets have been captured digitally and a CD-ROM with vector files of the Gulf of Mexico was due to be released in September 2001. A demonstration CD-ROM has already been prepared, its contents including in addition to track lines and contours, topography, feature and city names and imagery. A web site was jointly set up in 1998 by NGDC and INEGI.

Public Relations [IHO WP 4]

Although Public Relations has not featured specifically on meeting agendas, nations have taken the opportunity, when organising conferences or meetings, to invite local important decision makers in order to raise the profile of hydrography. For example France invited the Prefect of Martinique Department to the 3rd CGMHC Conference and Netherlands invited the Governor-General of the Netherlands Antilles to the “Amerigo Vespucci” Symposium where a number of hydrographic presentations were made.

5. Conclusions

- To review national arrangements and plans for the implementation of GMDSS with the co-ordinator of NAVAREA IV.
- To consider how best to establish a national co-ordinator for GMDSS and advise NAVAREA IV Co-ordinator.
- To contact the International Telecommunications Union to establish availability of funding for attendance at GMDSS workshops.
- To establish an inventory of surveys for the region.
- To liaise with the co-ordinator of INT chart region C1 to effect inclusion of the coast of Guyana in INT chart region B.
- That US, as co-ordinator, would promulgate the medium scale INT chart scheme once comments had been resolved and that nations should volunteer to act as producer nation for those charts not yet allocated.
- That nations would comment on the small scale INT chart scheme to the co-ordinator.
- To expedite the production of an ENC database for the region through preparation of a draft plan for the implementation of SHARED in the Caribbean.
- To identify training requirements in the region through inviting nations to complete a questionnaire.
- For all nations to state their requirements to the IHB for assistance in developing hydrographic capabilities, to allow development of hydrographic projects in the CGMHC area.
- To recommend adoption of a unique symbol for coral on nautical charts and to propose inclusion of the Coral Reef Initiative on other RHC agenda.
- To support the 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.
- To support a joint IHO-IHB proposal to the UN re SOLAS regulation V/9 on the provision of adequate world-wide hydrographic services.

6. Proposals for IHC 2002

Nil.
