

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE MESO-AMERICAN AND
CARIBBEAN SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (MACHC)
AND ELECTRONIC CHART SEMINAR
Veracruz, Mexico, 7-11 November 2005.



1. An Extraordinary Meeting of the Meso-American and Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission (MACHC), along with a Seminar on the Electronic Chart, was held at the Naval Academy of the Mexican Navy, in Veracruz (Mexico) organized by the *Secretaría de Marina* of Mexico. Representatives from Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, The Netherlands, Suriname, UK, USA and Venezuela attended the meeting, along with representatives from commercial firms who participated in the Seminar, namely CARIS, SevenCs, MPC, MAPTECH and the Universities of New Hampshire and Southern Mississippi. The meeting was chaired by Rear Admiral Edgar CELY NUÑEZ (Colombia).
2. A welcome speech was given by Vice Admiral Edgar NARRO Y QUESADA, General Director of Research and Development of the Mexican Navy, who stressed the importance of Hydrography for the region and recalled his country's commitment to sign agreements for the protection of the marine environment.

Other authorities attending the meeting were the Commander of the Third Naval Department, the Chief of Staff of the Third Naval Department and the Director of the Naval Academy.

Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA, IHB Director, and Rear Admiral Carlos ANGULO, Joint Director of the Directorate of Oceanography, Hydrography and Meteorology, gave a general overview of the Seminar. Captain GORZIGLIA referred to the obligations resulting from the adoption of the revised SOLAS Chapter V and RAdm. ANGULO highlighted the objectives of the Seminar of addressing fundamental topics such as the production, distribution and future use of electronic charts.

3. SEMINAR

The Seminar was divided into the following parts:

- I. Emerging technologies – with presentations from NAVOCEANO, CARIS, UNH and the UKHO;
- II. Training – with a presentation from USM;
- III. Data production for ENC's – with presentations from CARIS and SevenCs; and
- IV. Distribution of data – with presentations from MPC (Marine Press of Canada), MAPTECH, IC-ENC, Mexican H.O and the UNH.

Captain GORZIGLIA (IHB Director) summarized the subjects addressed by the Seminar and then followed a round-table discussion. The following points were highlighted:

- To produce ENC (and really improve safety to navigation) new data are needed;
- Making ENC's based on old data does not make any difference. On the contrary, expectations of safety improvement provided are not founded;
- In the case where we are ready to collect, manage and process new data, are we prepared to produce ENC's?
- Is that true of all MACHC countries?
- Distribution makes sense when there is something to distribute.

Overall, it was evident that there was a clear understanding on the unavoidable steps:

1. planning;
 2. data gathering;
 3. data processing/management;
 4. ENC production;
 5. ENC distribution;
 6. ENC maintenance.
- All these steps include challenges, as it is mandatory to provide the mariner with reliable, timely, confident consistent, uncorrupted and updated products;
 - Seminars like this present the advantage of offering the opportunity to see the world from different perspectives, all absolutely respectful but none of them "perfect".

4. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF MACHC

Review of the actions carried out since the 6th meeting of the MACHC (June 2005)

The Chairman welcomed the participants and regretted the absence of El Salvador recalling that the Commission Statutes had been changed in 2002 specifically to admit that country into the Commission. In spite of this, El Salvador had not participated in any Commission meeting since that decision.

The representative from the Dominican Republic apologized for the absence of her country in the past and stated that full participation was now envisaged for the future, including the reintegration in the IHO as a full member.

Captain TEJADA (Colombia) recalled that one special day had been devoted to MACHC during the Seminar on Phase 1 organized for the countries of the Commission in Cartagena, in June 2005, along with the Third meeting of the IHO Capacity Building Committee. He emphasized the large participation in that meeting of Caribbean countries and highlighted the following actions related to the region which were agreed for the following months:

- Visit to Caribbean countries by an Action Team ;
- Seminar for Chairmen of National Hydrographic Committees or similar;
- Visit to CARICOM by the MACHC Chairman.
- Approval of funding of a pilot project of a short Hydrographic Course submitted by Nicaragua.

The IHB Director reported on the status of ratifications of the amendments to the Convention approved at the 3rd Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference. He noted that all Regional Hydrographic Commissions must determine the method to adopt to designate representatives to serve on the future IHO Council. He also informed participants that the next SPWG meeting will be held in Mexico City, from 5 to 7 December 2005.

5. PROPOSALS SUBMITTED:

- Proposal 1 - Establishment of a regional Capacity Building Committee;
- Proposal 2 - Inclusion of Brazil in the Regional Hydrographic Commission;
- Proposal 3 - Review of the Statutes of the Commission;
- Proposal 4 - To upgrade the Working Group on Electronic Chart to Electronic Chart Committee.

5.1. Proposal 2 was unanimously approved and Brazil's representative, VAdm. Paulo Cesar DIAS DE LIMA, was congratulated on the admission of his country.

5.2. Following the approval of Proposals 1, 3 and 4, it was noted that there was not an agreed internal structure for the MACHC and its bodies. At the proposal of Colombia, a Drafting Group composed of Colombia, Mexico, UK, USA and Venezuela was formed with the following tasks:

- To present one month before the next MACHC meeting the following documents:
 - ü draft Terms of Reference for the internal structure, including the reports to be submitted and their periodicity as well as any other item that may improve the functioning of the Commission;
 - ü draft Terms of Reference for a MACHC Committee on Capacity Building; and
 - ü a proposal of amendment of the Statutes including amendments suggested by USA and other amendments that may be proposed at the meeting.
- To submit, by February 2006, a draft on the selection procedure of representatives from MACHC for the future IHO Council.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS BY THE STATES MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

The delegations of the countries attending presented the National Reports of their activities, including the status of hydrographic surveys and actions related to training and capacity building.

The need for training was common to all developing countries of the Commission and representatives from Colombia, Mexico, UK, USA and Venezuela tabled the various opportunities for training in their countries.

Capt. GORZIGLIA and Capt. BERMEJO (IHB) noted that the CBC Fund may contribute to some training needs, either by funding courses such as recently approved for Nicaragua

or by sending students to attend specific courses, such as the Multibeam course recently run in Plymouth, where 3 students were financed by the CBC Fund. It was also recalled that any project should be sent to the Commission Chairman who will transmit them to the CB Committee before its next meeting.

The representatives from Honduras requested that another high level visit be made to their country by the IHB, in view of the change of all governmental authorities in January 2006. The Commission approved this request and the visit was tentatively scheduled for March 2006. A similar request was made by the representative from the Dominican Republic.

It was also agreed to include Suriname in the list of countries to be visited by the Caribbean Team.

The representative from Venezuela presented both the MACHC Chairman and the IHB Director with copies of the Spanish version of the "Manual on Hydrography", translated by the Venezuelan Hydrographic Service. Captain Gorziglia expressed, on behalf of the IHO, his sincere gratitude to the Venezuelan H.O. for this valuable contribution.

7. COMMITTEE ON ELECTRONIC CHART

The Committee on the Electronic Chart held separate meetings for Task Groups 1 and 2. Task Group 1 discussions focused on the development of the "Gulf of Honduras Project" and Task Group 2 worked on the development of ENC coverage and production in the area. Both Task Groups presented reports that were endorsed by the plenary MACHC.

8. ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE MACHC

The Commission approved the following Action List:

1. Establishment of a Drafting Group formed by Colombia, Mexico, UK USA and Venezuela with the tasks described under 5.1;
2. Approval of the change of the "Electronic Chart Working Group" into "Committee on Electronic Chart";
3. All requests for support from the CBC will be collected by the MACHC Chairman up to 15 March 2006, to be sent by 1st April 2006 to the CBC Chairman for consideration at the next CBC meeting. The relevant information will be available on the MACHC Web page;
4. The membership of MACHC is enlarged to include Brazil;
5. The technical visit to Belize, approved at the meeting in Cartagena (Colombia, June 2005) and postponed because of Hurricane Katrina, will be re-scheduled;
6. Suriname will be included in the technical visits to be carried out to the Caribbean countries by an Action Team (possibly in February 2006);
7. New high-level visits will be paid by IHB representatives to Honduras and the Dominican Republic (possibly in March 2006);
8. All MACHC countries should send their input to the IHO Work Programme 2008-2012 by 30 May 2006. The Chairman will collate the contributions and will prepare a document to be submitted to the IHB by 1st August 2006;
9. From 1st January 2006, members who have not yet signed the Statutes will be listed separately with the note "Following membership procedures";
10. MACHC will use the format proposed by the IHB for standardization of their national reports;

11. The possible establishment of a RENC in the region to facilitate ENC distribution will be discussed at the next MACHC meeting. Each country should assess its position with respect to ENC;
12. Mexico is nominated Chairman of MACHC. The responsibilities will be transferred on 30 March 2006 from Colombia;
13. The 7th MACHC Meeting will be held in Acapulco (Mexico) during the second half of September or early October 2006. A Seminar for Chairmen of National Hydrographic Committees of the region will be held alongside the meeting, organized and funded by the IHO CBC (3 days).

A complete report of the meeting and related documents will be posted on the IHO Web site as soon as it is received from the MACHC Secretariat.