

MESO AMERICAN – CARIBBEAN SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (MACHC)

Disaster Response Framework  
(Version 27/11/2018)

References: IHO Resolution 1/2005 as amended  
IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended  
MACHC Statutes

1. Introduction

This plan aims at preparing the MACHC to respond to disasters in accordance with the Reference. This will be done in two steps:

- a) Preparation activities; and
- b) Implementation activities following a disaster.

These two groups of activities are described below.

2. Preparation of the Contingency Framework by MACHC coastal States:

- a) Inform the MACHC Chair on points of contact and the means of communication (attention should be given to provide alternative means of communication in case the country has no telephonic and email access):
  - i) Senior Point of Contact
  - ii) Working Point of Contact
  - iii) Communication means
- b) Prepare and keep updated with the MACHC Chair a checklist for the key infrastructure in order to assess whether they are intact or need some urgent action. A generic template is provided in Annex A.
- c) Prepare and keep updated a National Communication Plan identifying the stakeholders that will need to be contacted in order to obtain/to pass relevant information. Consider using alternative means of communication such as radio communications or WhatsApp if e-mail is not accessible.
- d) Identify appropriate contacts in the national foreign Ministry to facilitate requests for help via diplomatic channels

3. Preparation of a GIS layer to support coordination

A GIS layer representing the hydrographic efforts to help the Chair in his/hers coordinating role. For example, the layer could indicate the affected ports and routes, the deployment of surveys teams, supporting imageries, status of MSI, outcomes of Analyzed Imagery, recommended routes for humanitarian ships, etc. Such a system has the potential to avoid duplications and assure the establishment of the priorities by the governments providing support. Chair will seek support to the establishment and maintenance of the GIS.

4. Preparation of the Contingency Plan by the MACHC Chair:
  - a) Compile the information provided in 2 and prepare a Communication Plan based on the information provided (template in Annex B).
  - b) Prepare a list of (possibly) available assets that coastal States can consider for request via diplomatic channels to the neighboring States. A generic template is provided in Annex C.
5. Response implementation activities by a coastal State following a disaster:
  - a) Conduct the initial assessment of the key infrastructure using the checklist prepared in 2b.
  - b) Assess the specific effects on shipping of the existence of obstacles and any changes to the seafloor that can hinder navigation, taking full account of the effects of drifting obstacles which may also hinder preliminary survey results.
  - c) Prepare a priority plan for survey and charting to ensure that the passage of support and supplies through maritime channels and ports, and the marking of new dangers where necessary
  - d) Inform the MACHC Chair the result of the assessment performed in 4a, b and c as soon as practicable.
  - e) Prepare a list of necessary support (3c) is communicated to the minister of foreign affairs via the chain of command in order to assure timely diplomatic clearance for other Members States hydrographic assets as part disaster relief.

The response to a disaster can be divided into activities for immediate response and a subsequent recovery response.

6. Implementation activities by the MACHC Chair:
  - a) Establish communication with the coastal State in distress in order to obtain the initial assessment (4b)
  - b) Take the necessary actions in coordination with the coastal State.
  - c) Prepare a situation awareness report (template in Annex D) to be disseminated to all the coastal States as established in the Communication Plan. Disseminate updates as deemed necessary.
  - d) Communicate with the NAVAREA Coordinators to ensure awareness of the situation and that the necessary navigational information is disseminated.
  - e) Liaise with the IHO Secretariat.
  - f) Communicate with the appropriate Regional and International Organizations to coordinate the efforts, for example:
    - i) CDEMA (<http://www.cdema.org>)
    - ii) RAC-REMPEITC Caribe (<http://www.racrempeitc.org>)
    - iii) IMO (<http://www.imo.org>)
    - iv) IALA (<http://www.iala-aism.org>)
    - v) MapAction (<http://www.mapaction.org>)Refer to the Communications plan for a complete list of organizations
  - g) Decide, based on the information collected, whether an Extraordinary Meeting of the MACHC (or videoconference) is needed, in order to discuss in detail the problems, evaluate the damage and respond to requests for support.

## 7. Establishment of the MACHC Contingency Framework

The MACHC Contingency Framework will be prepared based on the information provided with the annexes and approved by each MACHC meeting or by correspondence as necessary, based on the information provided by the coastal States. The Chair should ensure that a permanent agenda item on RHC meetings in order to monitor the readiness of the Commission to respond to disasters and conducting regular table-top exercises to evaluate the procedures.

## 8. Online documents

Relevant documents will be made available online in the IHO website or the MACHC website as appropriate. It will also include National Response Plans, experiences and related best practices.

**Annex A** - Template for the definition of the key infrastructure components in coastal States

**Annex B** - Template for the Communications Plan

**Annex C** - Template for the establishment of possible support to be requested to neighboring States via diplomatic channels

**Annex D** - Template for the Situation Awareness Report

### **Annex A**

Checklist Template for the definition of the key infrastructure components in coastal States

- 1) Situation in each of the key ports, their accesses and critical passage points:
  - a) Existence of debris and obstructions
  - b) Possible changes to the charted depths
  - c) Working condition of tide gauges
  - d) Working condition of AtoN
  - e) Capacity to disseminate key navigational information to the National MSI Coordinator
- 2) Capacity of the National MSI Coordinator to:
  - a) promulgate the appropriate navigational warnings and necessary information and advice to shipping through existing channels (e.g. NAVTEX, SafetyNET, etc.)
  - b) communicate with the NAVAREA Coordinator.
  - c) communicate with the other national agencies as established in the National Communication Plan.

### **Annex B**

(to be developed)

### **Annex C**

Template for the establishment of possible support to be requested to neighboring States via diplomatic channels

- 1) reconnaissance/assessment flights
- 2) assessment using satellite imagery, including satellite-derived bathymetry
- 3) deployable survey teams
- 4) production of interim-ENC
- 5) preparation of situational awareness maps

### **Annex D**

(to be developed)