

3rd SESSION OF THE IHO ASSEMBLY

Monaco, 2-5 May 2023

REPORT OF THE ROPME SEA AREA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (RSAHC)

1. **Chair:** Captain Yahya AL-BALUSHI (Oman)
Vice-Chair: Saud Hamoud M Alruways (Saudi Arabia)

2. **Membership:**

Members: Bahrain, IR of Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

Associate Members: France, Iraq, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Observers: Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), Middle East Navigation Service (MENAS), International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), Arabian Maritime and Navigation Aids Services LLC (AMNAS)

3. **Meetings:**

9th RSAHC Meeting Muscat, Oman 15 - 17 November 2022.

4. **Agenda Items:**

Main activities of RSAHC are the progress in developing the INT chart schemes, ENC production, MSI, inter-state co-operation under the capacity-building program, and other activities and issues as decided by the Commission, including National Reports, Review of Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting in the RSAHC (IHO Publication C-55).

The following notable topics have been discussed at the 9th RSAHC meeting:

1. Review of action items from the previous meetings (RSAHC8).
2. Report by IHO Secretariat.
3. National reports (major items and highlights only) by members and associate members.
4. Review of Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting in the RSAHC (IHO Publication C-55).
5. Report by INT Chart Coordinator (IR of Iran).
6. Report by ENC Regional Coordinator (IR of Iran) – Progress on the implementation of ENC coverage and other issues.
7. Promulgation of Navigational Warnings with NAVAREA IX area, MSI in NAVAREA IX and the implementation of GMDSS. (Pakistan)
8. Capacity-building status and report by Capacity-building Coordinator (IR of Iran).

9. Relevant International organizations' report, including IALA, etc.

10. Presentations by Industrial Partners (IXblue, Kongsberg, Fugro, EOMAP)

5. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed:

1. While most regional communication is conducted through emails, there are still numerous problems in the way of robust safe and permanent communication between Member States to allow better cooperation within the region. As IHO has been informed, it has been observed in the past few years that the Member States of RSAHC have limited participation in regional hydrographic activities and as mentioned in the last meeting the Chair Office faced difficulty reaching the focal point of hydrographic authorities and a lack of communication in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.
2. Certain overlaps in ENC cells between Iran and UK, Oman and UK, as well as between Pakistan (Region I) and India (Region J).
3. Following the introduction of new standards such as S-100 series and their implementation in a near future, all the Member States in Region I will need proper training to prepare accordingly.

6. Achievements/outputs/conclusions:

1. IR of Iran is a CB Coordinator and INT Charts Coordinator of the RSAHC Region.
2. A technical visit of Iran and Iraq to be arranged by IHO and IALA as discussed in RSAHC9.
3. A merger between RSAHC and NIOHC could strengthen the regional activities and engagement, since the regions are adjacent and a few states (i.e. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) are already members of both RHCs.
4. Good participation in IHO e-Learning Center and CB training.
5. Since the period between Commission Meeting (RSAHC8) in February 2018 and the last Commission Meeting (RSAHC9) in November 2022, a better ENC coverage in the region achieved, which in turn means better coverage of un-surveyed areas in RSAHC region.
6. Good progress is being made with the aspirations of nations to attain IHO Membership, Iraq to sign the RSAHC statutes IAW RSAHC statutes.
7. The RSAHC encourage nomination of a coordinator to promote establishment of MSDI working group and S-100 Services Coordinator for RSAHC.
8. There has been a high level of industry participation in RSAHC meetings with many opportunities to share experiences and contribute to discussions.

7. Actions required of the Assembly:

- a) **Note** the report of the RSAHC.
- b) **Take** any other action considered appropriate.