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CIRCULAR LETTER 05/2018  
18 January 2018

**PREPARATION FOR THE 5<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF  
THE IMO SUB-COMMITTEE ON NAVIGATION, COMMUNICATIONS  
AND SEARCH AND RESCUE (NCSR)**

**19 to 23 February 2018, London, United Kingdom**

References:

- A. IHO CL 29/2017 dated 31 March - *Report on the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the IMO Sub Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR4)*
- B. IHO CL 43/2017 dated 30 June – *Report on the 98<sup>th</sup> Session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee*

Dear Hydrographer,

1. As announced in Reference A, the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR 5) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) will take place from 19 to 23 February 2018 at the IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom.
2. The provisional agenda for NCSR 5 (NCSR 5/1) includes a significant number of items of interest to IHO Member States, namely:
  - 3 *Routeing measures and mandatory ship reporting systems;*
  - 6 *Guidelines for the harmonized display of navigation information received via communications equipment;*
  - 7 *Guidelines on standardized modes of operation, S-mode;*
  - 8 *Develop guidance on definition and harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Service Portfolios (MSPs)*
  - 9 *Updating of the GMDSS master plan and guidelines on MSI (maritime safety information) provisions;*
  - 10 *Consequential work related to the new Polar Code;*
  - 11 *Revision of SOLAS chapters III and IV for Modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), including related and consequential amendments to other existing instruments;*
  - 12 *Response to matters related to the Radiocommunication ITU-R Study Group and ITU World Radiocommunication Conference;*
  - 14 *Developments in GMDSS satellite services; and*
  - 22 *Any other business;*
3. On behalf of the IHO, and in accordance with the arrangements agreed with the relevant IHO Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups, the Secretariat has submitted or co-sponsored papers related to items 9, 11 and 22. As it is represented in the related groups, the IHO has also

contributed to the report submitted under agenda items 6, 8, 12 and 14. The list of the relevant documents is provided at Annex A.

4. Member States are encouraged to liaise with and brief their national delegations at NCSR 5 on the issues of relevance to the IHO. They are invited, in particular, to take into consideration the comments summarized in Annex B, related to the documents submitted under agenda items 9 and 22.

5. IHO Member States intending to be represented at NCSR 5 are invited to indicate to the Secretariat at [cl-lc@iho.int](mailto:cl-lc@iho.int) (copy to [adso@iho.int](mailto:adso@iho.int)) the name and e-mail of their representative(s) to facilitate coordination at the meeting, if and as appropriate.

On behalf of the Secretary-General  
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abri KAMPFER', written in a cursive style.

Abri KAMPFER  
Director

Annexes:

- Annex A: *List of NCSR 5 documents submitted or co-sponsored by the IHO or including an IHO contribution.*
- Annex B: *Comments to be considered by IHO Member States when briefing their national delegation at NCSR 5*

**List of NCSR 5 documents submitted or co-sponsored by the IHO  
or including an IHO contribution**

***Agenda Item 6 - Guidelines for the harmonized display of navigation information received via communications equipment***

NCSR 5/6 - Development of guidelines for the harmonized display of navigation information received via communications equipment

***Agenda Item 7 - Guidelines on standardized modes of operation, S-mode***

NCSR 5/7 - Development of guidance on the Standardised (or S) Mode of operation of navigation equipment

***Agenda Item 8 - Develop guidance on definition and harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Service Portfolios (MSPs)***

NCSR 5/8 - Report of the first meeting of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM)

NCSR 5/8/1 - Draft terms of reference for the second meeting of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM)

***Agenda Item 9 - Updating of the GMDSS master plan and guidelines on MSI (maritime safety information) provisions***

NCSR 5/9 - Outcome of the ninth session of the IHO World-Wide Navigational Warning Service Sub-Committee (WWNWS-SC)

NCSR5/9/2 - Promulgation of Maritime Safety Information - NAVTEX Service Annual report IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel

***Agenda Item 11 - Revision of SOLAS chapters III and IV for Modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), including related and consequential amendments to other existing instruments***

NCSR 5/11 - Report of the Correspondence Group on the draft of the Modernization Plan of the GMDSS

NCSR5/11/3 - Comments on the report of the correspondence group

NCSR5/11/4 - Comments on the report of the correspondence group

***Agenda Item 12 - Response to matters related to ITU World Radiocommunication Conference***

NCSR 5/12 - Report of the thirteenth meeting of the Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group on Maritime radiocommunication matters

***Agenda Item 14 - Developments in GMDSS satellite services***

NCSR 5/14/1 - Recognition of the Inmarsat Fleet Broadband Maritime Safety Data Service for use in the GMDSS

NCSR 5/14/2 - Recognition of Iridium mobile satellite system as GMDSS service provider

***Agenda Item 22 - Any other business***

NCSR 5/22/5 - Report on monitoring of ECDIS issues by the IHO

NCSR 5/22/6 - Comments on updates of electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS) - Outcome of III 4

**Comments to be considered by IHO Member States when briefing  
their national delegation at NCSR 5**

***Agenda Item 8 - Develop guidance on definition and harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Service Portfolios (MSPs)***

*Report of the first meeting of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM)  
Draft terms of reference for the second meeting of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM)*

In accordance with the outcome of the 98<sup>th</sup> session of the MSC (see Reference B), the Secretariat participated in the first meeting of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM). IHO Member States are invited to liaise with their national maritime administrations to consider supporting the requested actions of the Sub-Committee and the proposed revised Terms of Reference for the HGDM.

***Agenda Item 9 - Updating of the GMDSS master plan and guidelines on MSI (maritime safety information) provisions***

As discussed at the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the World-Wide Navigational Warning Service Sub-Committee (WWNWS-SC), there is continued concern on the unannounced missile firings by the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the potential danger to safety of navigation. As was the case in the past, the DPRK needs to recognise its international responsibilities and provide a minimum of 5 days notice to these planned events to ensure adequate warnings can be issued to mariners. IHO Member States, particularly those acting as NAVAREA Coordinators, are invited to liaise with their national maritime administrations to consider supporting the requested action of the Sub-Committee.

***Agenda Item 11 - Modernization Plan of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)***

The IHO contributed to the Correspondence Group (CG) on the draft SOLAS amendments as well as co-sponsoring two submissions with particular comments on individual sections of the SOLAS chapters III and IV. IHO Member States, particularly those acting as NAVAREA Coordinators, are invited to liaise with their national maritime administrations to consider supporting the comments.

***Agenda Item 14 – Developments in Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) satellite services***

*Recognition of the Inmarsat FleetBroadband Maritime Safety Data Service for use in the GMDSS  
Recognition of Iridium mobile satellite system as GMDSS service provider*

Members of the WWNWS-SC contributed to the assessment of the Inmarsat FleetBroadband Marine Safety Data Service conducted by IMSO. The general view was that the WWNWS-SC could support the outcomes reported by IMSO and the action recommended to the NCSR5. Members of the WWNWS-SC also participated in the recently completed technical assessment of the Iridium mobile satellite system conducted by IMSO, as reported in document NCSR5/14/2 (Recognition of Iridium mobile satellite system as GMDSS service provider). Despite the positive recommendations from IMSO and the draft resolution announcing the recognition provided in document NCSR 5/14/8, a number of concerns have been identified by the WWNWS-SC; the main ones being the way the implementation conditions are set to include development of the Iridium Manual, when it clearly states in the IMSO document that a terminal will come in due time. In the view of the WWNWS-SC it would not be appropriate to have a manual in place before a "type approved" mobile transceiver is available as this could generate too many disconnects. The WWNWS-SC are also concerned that the operational implementation is not addressed in any meaningful detail, comments such as "making arrangements to facilitate broadcast of MSI messages via the Iridium system" beg the question 'how can you when ships or MSI providers do not have the terminals or equipment in place?' The WWNWS-SC considers this in itself could take at least a year or two to achieve and it is seriously concerned that the cost implications to the NAVAREA and METAREA Coordinators have not been recognised.

More generally the WWNWS-SC feels the shore based providers have not been considered in any meaningful way; the WWNWS-SC is concerned that the IMO member States will approve the recognition of Iridium and feel they have completed their remit as articulated in A.1001(25), leaving other organizations and authorities to make it happen.

***Agenda Item 22 - Any other business***

*Report on monitoring of ECDIS issues by the IHO*

As confirmed at NCSR 4 (see Reference A), the IHO withdrew Edition 6.0 of Publication S-52 - *Specifications for Chart Content and Display Aspects of ECDIS*, Edition 3.4 of S-52 Annex A - *IHO Presentation Library for ECDIS* and Edition 2.0 of Publication S-64 - *IHO Test Data Sets for ECDIS* on 31 August 2017. 9 As a result of the withdrawal of S-52 Edition 3.4 and S-64 and considering that some items of MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1 relate specifically to these publication editions, document NCSR 5/22/5 invites the Sub-Committee to consider revising the Circular. Member States are invited to liaise with their national maritime administrations to consider supporting the revision of MCS.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1.

*Comments on Updates of electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS) - Outcome of III 4*

Document NCSR 5/22 – *Updates of electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS) - Outcome of III 4* – provided details on the discussions at III 4 on the issue of non-compliant ECDIS using outdated editions of specifications from the port State control perspective and the resultant guidance III.2/Circ.2 – *Action to be taken by port States on the required update of Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS)*. NCSR 5/22/6 – *Comments on Updates of electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS) - Outcome of III 4* – provides comment on NCSR 5/22 and recommends that the III.2/Circ.2 could be reviewed and considered for revocation at III 5. Member States are invited to liaise with their national maritime administrations to consider supporting the requested action of the Sub-Committee.