

**To the Arctic Council working group on the Protection  
of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)**

**Division**  
Danish Hydrographic Office

**Date**  
16 January 2017

**6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Arctic Regional Hydrographic  
Commission (ARHC) and Ocean Innovation 2016 Conference  
Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada 3- 6 October**

Dear members of PAME. I would like to provide a brief update of the activities of the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC) for your consideration.

The 6<sup>th</sup> conference of the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC) was held in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada on 3 and 6 October, back to back with the Ocean Innovation 2016 Conference that took place on 4 and 5 October. The Ocean Innovation Conference is the premier Canadian oceans conference. 22 participants representing four of the five ARHC Members (Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the USA), two Observer States (Finland and Iceland) and one Observer from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. The Russian Federation was unable to be represented at the Conference but provided written inputs that were taken into account or noted. The Conference was hosted by the Canadian Hydrographic Service and chaired by Mr Denis Hains, Director General of the Canadian Hydrographic Service and Hydrographer - General of Canada. Assistant Director Yves Guillam represented the IHO secretariat.

As a result of the imminent entry into force of the Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO, discussions began with a proposal to align the existing Statutes of the ARHC with the new terminology and conditions set out in the new IHO basic documents, including a new Annex to the Statutes describing the process adopted for the selection of a State to occupy the seat on the IHO Council allocated to the ARHC. As a result, the Russian Federation was designated to be the first to occupy the seat when the IHO Council is established at the IHO Assembly in April 2017. Formal signing of the amended statutes of ARHC by all Members will take place after a final check of the text and will be done by correspondence or during a special meeting of the ARHC that may take place in the margins of the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the IHO Assembly in April 2017. All participants reported on their activities in the Arctic region and the challenges they face. In particular, the delegation from Denmark reported on the challenges in Greenland waters in relation with the reorganization of the Danish Geodata Agency. It was agreed by Canada and Norway to discuss further the scope and management of the Arctic International Charting Coordination Working Group so that ENC and INT chart coverage and maintenance issues can be considered together

The Conference agreed to establish the Arctic Regional Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group (ARMSDIWG), the Terms of Reference of which were approved.

Following the visit paid in June 2016 by the President of the IHB Directing Committee to the Director of the Secretariat of the Arctic Council it is likely that the ARHC, through the IHO, will be recognized as an Observer to the Arctic Council at the next Ministerial meeting in May 2017. ARHC Members confirmed their readiness to provide further input and support as soon as the Organization is recognized as an Observer to the Arctic Council.

The Commission agreed that ARHC's involvement might then not be limited only to the Arctic Council working group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME). Fruitful discussions took place on crowd - sourced bathymetry, on surveys using autonomous vehicles, on the need to engage with the cruise shipping industry. In accordance with the established policy of rotation of the Chair, Denmark was elevated from the position of Vice – Chair to take over the Chair at the end of the meeting. Norway was elected to occupy the resultant vacant Vice - Chair position. Having considered the provisional dates for the first session of the IHO Council, planned in Monaco from 17 to 19 October 2017, the Conference noted Denmark's offer to host the next meeting in Greenland in August 2017.

The ARHC delegates agreed to report at ARHC- 7 on the activities and plans to better engage with the Northern communities and make benefit of traditional knowledge. A short brief on the effects of noise on Arctic marine mammals prepared by the Canadian Hydrographic Service was considered as very helpful for delivering positive and reassuring messages to the communities on the impact of hydrographic surveys.

Best regards



Pia Dahl Højgaard  
Chairman of the ARHC