

VANUATU COUNTRY REPORT

14th South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission Meeting

Noumea, New Caledonia

30th November 2016

Mr Chair,

Our country report will not be so different to the one we presented in Rarotanga Cook Island in 2015. Simple because we have not done much work due to 3 reasons; 1. Cyclone PAM post recovery program and secondly we had General Election and thus a new Government. At 4pm yesterday there was a vote of no confidence against the Prime Minister.

However the main reason was that after the Rarotanga meeting in 2015 we realized that a legislation in place was absolutely key to empowering and better managing the role as each one of us or a group carryout its duty in the implementation of our hydrographic services and MSI in our country. Whether there is a cyclone or a change in Government

“ a wise sailor told me last night over kava session that one of the most important gear on a ship is the compass, without a compass you lose sense of direction”

Mr. Chair Vanuatu needs to have a good compass more than ever not only to withstand political changes or natural disasters but move forward in its international obligation to ensure its waters are safe.

Mr. Chair

So in brief we still have 7 areas (more tourist oriented) with up to date charts including another one done this year in Port Vila again by SPC as part of the Post Cyclone Pam recovery effort program. And we are expecting to have one or two in the near future. We also under took one

CAT B training this year...so As far as Hydrographic survey is concern, the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu is forever ready to give full support to future hydrographic survey work to be undertaken especially on areas that still need to be charted.

IALA undertook a country visit this year and have a submitted a technical needs assessment report from this visit.

Funding and capacity building remain the ongoing issues

Mr Chair

Sadly Maritime and Safety information work program in Vanuatu does not ignite the same level of enthusiasm from the political authorities as Hydrography. The reason varies but I believe generally a lack of a robust awareness on the important role of the MSI and how it links with the work of hydrography and the Safety of life at Sea convention has not been undertaking aggressively from the begin. Politician are quick to approve 30 million Vatu to undertake hydrography survey on three sites in Vanuatu but will take years to approve a budget to installing or maintaining a much needed light house that cost much less (as an example). Politician are not to be held responsible but the in country technical people. MSI in country training remains and ongoing issue

Mr. Chair

Challenges

So after a whole years work we finally manage to complete a draft Legislation. "The Office of the Maritime Regulator Act" is considered the most important strategic undertaking in the development of Hydrography and MSI work program in Vanuatu since independence 36 years ago. We believe that it is timely that Vanuatu has a legislation in place , in order for better management and most importantly the sustain the work of hydrography and MSI for the future come.

However as you all are aware, at 3.45 pm yesterday there was a Vote of no Confidence against the Prime Minister. The good news was that it was defeated but the (not so good news) is that parliament came to a close

with 11 government bill not being able to table. We do hope that our maritime legislation is not one of those 11.

Mr Chair

Challenges

if the legislation has passed in parliament already or will be in the near future then we will need your support and assistance in the implementation of the relevant provision especially those in relation to the progressing the work of hydrography and MSI. I have already express our desire to have an in country MSI training to assist with the implementation of the legislation and as such would like to reaffirm and reemphasis again the need to have a in country MSI training workshop next year.

Mr Chair

Recommendation.

1. We truly welcome and appreciate our hydrographic and MSI partners in the region and internationally in coming in to the country with the heart to assist with our hydrography and MSI development work program. However we sincerely request that such visit be coordinated in a manner that does not bring about confusion to the political authorities and one that we shall regard as adding value to the work already done but not duplicating efforts nor something completely outside even from our 15 years national sustainable development plan.

2. Having a workshop before the commission is practically very important especially in engaging ourselves with our MSI focal points and Primary Charting authority thus if I may, call on the commission to have workshops prior to future commission meeting

In the next commission meeting I can assure you all that Vanuatu will already be a member of the IHO. We cannot be seen as advocating on SDG14 without being a member to the IHO so I call on my fellow colleague in the region to join IHO and collectively we can contribute to promoting a safety of life at sea in our region.

For those important institution which have assist us in one way or the other this year we would like to thank you for your ongoing assistance. We are particularly grateful, Sam Harper UKHO office for always taking a keen interest to providing hydrographic support to our country's needs.

Mr Chair

Thank you all for your attention.