



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FINAL REPORT of the IHO Strategic Planning Working Group

In April 2002, the XVth Conference resolved that there should be a thorough review of the Basic Documents of the IHO and of its structure and procedures, in order to determine whether a more flexible, efficient Organization could be constructed.

It tasked the SPWG to undertake this review and to make appropriate recommendations to an Extraordinary Conference in April 2005. The SPWG was also tasked with addressing a number of proposals deferred from the Conference, which were seen as being complementary to the main review. The XVth Conference encouraged each Regional Hydrographic Commission to select a representative for the SPWG. It elected the Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen for the SPWG, and asked the IHB President to represent the Bureau and to provide a secretary. The SPWG met in full plenary sessions on five occasions to address this task; all the RHCs and several individual Member States contributed strongly to the debates.

A holistic approach to the task was adopted to ensure a structured, logical and rigorous review. The SPWG established an image of the future IHO defined through statements of its Vision, Mission and Objectives. It determined, through a review of past documents and a survey of Member States' opinions, what strengths and weaknesses the IHO currently possessed which would help or hinder it from achieving the Vision, Mission & Objectives. After assessing and debating many potential candidates for an IHO structure, the SPWG proposed a structure and set of operational procedures which it believed were best suited to maintain the strengths, overcome the weaknesses and achieve the Mission, Vision and Objectives. It took into account the needs to show increased effectiveness and cost-effectiveness and to maintain the IHO's status as a competent international organization.

This report presents the new model for the structure and operating procedures of the IHO, and identifies where and how the Basic Documents should be amended in order to implement the proposed model. It recommends that the 3rd Extraordinary IH Conference adopts the report and implements the proposed model.

The proposed Vision, Mission and Objectives of the IHO are:

Vision: to be the recognised international hydrographic authority advancing maritime safety and efficiency, and supporting the protection and sustainable use of the marine environment.

Mission: to create a global environment in which States provide adequate and timely hydrographic data, products and services and ensure their widest possible use.

Objectives

- promote the use of hydrography for the safety of navigation and all other marine purposes and to raise global awareness of the importance of hydrography;
- improve global coverage, availability, quality and access to hydrographic data, information, products and services;
- improve global hydrographic capability, capacity, science and techniques.
- establish and support the development of international standards for the quality and formats of hydrographic data, information, products, services and techniques and to achieve the greatest possible uniformity in the use of these standards;
- give authoritative and timely guidance on all hydrographic matters to States and international organizations;
- facilitate coordination of hydrographic activities among Member States;
- enhance cooperation on hydrographic activities amongst States on a regional basis.

The strengths which the IHO currently has, which will help it achieve its Vision, Mission and Objectives, can be summarised through its being: an international organization with global reach but acting regionally through the RHCs, being technology focused, concerned with improving technical capability amongst its members and being cost-effective. The SPWG determined that any restructuring of the IHO must not diminish those strengths in any way.

The perceived weaknesses of the current organization include its slow decision-making processes, legalistic/inflexible nature, slow growth in membership, the style and frequency of its Conferences, its inadequate interaction with industry, the slow pace of improvement in technical capability of many members, the lack of progress within RHCs, and the appearance of the Bureau as almost a separate entity from the IHO itself. The SPWG determined that any re-structuring of the IHO must remove those weaknesses.

Thus the proposed new structure for the IHO is designed to maintain the strengths, eliminate the weaknesses, achieve the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the IHO and be a more effective and cost effective system. It is based on:

- ◆ An Assembly
 - comprising all Member States, meeting every 3 years
 - being the principal organ of the IHO
 - being strategically focused.

- ◆ A Council
 - meeting annually
 - being a smaller, more dynamic body
 - focusing on the continuous operation of the IHO
 - comprising 30 Member States - or 25% of all MS, whichever number is greater – two thirds of the seats for representatives of the RHCs and one third of the seats for the states with greatest hydrographic interest (measured by tonnage).

- ◆ A Finance Committee
 - open to all Member States
 - meeting in conjunction with the Assembly
 - being responsible for presenting the IHO's budget and administrative and financial policies for approval by the Assembly.

- ◆ Subsidiary Organs
 - Committees open to all Member States, meeting annually:
 - a Hydrographic Services & Standards Committee (HSSC), being a technical committee responsible for the development of international standards for the quality and formats of hydrographic data and information, and the greatest possible uniformity in their use of these standards;
 - an Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC), being responsible for generating and monitoring the work to be carried out by the Regional Hydrographic Commissions, promoting Capacity Building and co-operation with regional organizations concerned with the use of hydrographic information.

- ◆ Regional Hydrographic Commissions
 - continuing as presently configured
 - having some Agenda items of RHC meetings being prescribed to take account of the Strategic Plan & Work Programme and Capacity-building, other parts being structured to consider regional issues and plans.

- ◆ Legal Advisory Group
 - comprising legal experts from any or all MS
 - meeting by request of the Assembly, Council, Finance Committee or Subsidiary Organs
 - advising on specific matters and within specific timescales.

- ◆ Industry and NGIO Participation
 - accredited Industry Groups comprising representatives of Industry, Academia, Professional Institutions, and end-users of the IHO's products and services.
 - defined and managed as determined by their own participants.
 - coordinating industry participation in (and inputs to) the work of the IHO, and proposing relevant methodologies and solutions.
 - representatives of the accredited Groups attending Subsidiary Organs, Council and Assembly meetings as observers.

- ◆ A Secretariat
 - Secretary-General
 - elected by the Assembly for a period of 6 years
 - re-election at a subsequent Assembly for a further 3 years
 - chief administrative officer of the Organization, head of the Secretariat and responsible for its efficient operation
 - supporting the Assembly, Council and Finance Committee
 - representing the IHO to other national, international or non-governmental organizations.

 - Directors
 - elected by the Assembly for a period of 6 years
 - re-election at a subsequent Assembly for a further 3 years
 - reporting to the Secretary-General
 - providing support to the organs of the IHO as required.

 - Professional Assistants
 - selected by the Secretary-General
 - providing support to the Secretary-General and organs of the IHO as required.

The SPWG will propose to the IH Extraordinary Conference in Monaco in April 2005 the acceptance of this report as the conclusions of the SPWG study, and will propose a resolution that the Conference adopts the Proposed Model for the IHO, approves the consequential amendments to the Convention and agrees the basic structure of the revised Basic Documents. It will propose that the Conference tasks the SPWG with preparing an implementation plan to take forward the decisions of the Conference.