

IHO File No. S1/6200/A-2

**COUNCIL CIRCULAR LETTER 02/2020**  
**05 May 2020****CONTINUATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL IN THE INTERIM PERIOD  
UNTIL THE POSTPONED ASSEMBLY**

## References:

- A: Assembly Circular Letter 19 dated 21 April 2020 - *Approval of the Proposed scenario on the postponement of the 2nd Session of the IHO Assembly and associated activities*
- B: Assembly Circular Letter 17 dated 20 March 2020 – *Proposed scenario on the postponement of the 2nd session of the IHO Assembly and associated activities resulting from exceptional circumstances due to COVID-19.*
- C: [Council Report](#)
- D: [PRO 1.8](#) Revised Strategic Plan
- E: [PRO 1.6](#) Revision of Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the IHO Council and consequence on Rules 8 and 11 – timing of election of the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- F: [Council Membership](#)
- G: [SPRWG Membership](#)
- H: IHO CL 52/2019 dated 23 October 2019 - *Notice of the distribution of regionally based seats on the IHO Council*

*Fellow Members of the IHO Council,*

*I write to you in these difficult times for all of us around the world, in our common struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic. I know that this disease has had a profound effect on all of us, in our personal and professional lives. It endangers our health, lives, and livelihoods. I ask you to join me in gratitude and support for our health care workers who are on the front lines of this crisis. I am wishing for good health for you, your families, and your colleagues in the difficult months ahead.*

*On behalf of the Member States of the IHO, I wish to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General for his leadership first in ensuring that the IHO Secretariat's staff are safely working from home, and taking no unnecessary risks on our behalf. I also extend my thanks to the Secretariat for preparing alternative arrangements for the Second Assembly of the IHO, and to the Member States for their flexibility and pragmatism in this difficult year.*

1. As noted in ACL 19/2020 (Reference A), the proposed scenario on the postponement of the 2nd Session of the IHO Assembly and associated activities resulting from exceptional circumstances due to COVID-19 have been approved by Member States. This approval results in consequences for continuation of work and actions placed on the Council and other IHO bodies in the interim until November.

2. By means of Reference A, the Secretary-General shared his observation that, similar to the Assembly, the Council and the main subordinate bodies such as HSSC and IRCC, including their associated Sub Committees and Working Groups, are subject to adaptations of their respective schedules and working arrangements originally assigned to them in the IHO Work Programme 2020. Some of those bodies are already working on postponement of their meetings and alternative working arrangements via video conferencing and collaborative

workspaces. Since it seems appropriate that their working results achieved in the interim should be reflected at the forthcoming Assembly, the Secretariat is proposing to accept updates on their respective reports pertaining to the anticipated Agenda items of the Assembly. Their submission and presentation should become elements of the Council Chair report, the respective parts delegated to be reported by the Chairs of HSSC and IRCC, and Secretary-General's proposals respectively.

3. These expected updates allow the reports and proposals from the IHO's main bodies to reflect progress on key issues and changes within the months before the Assembly commences. For the Council, this affords us the opportunity to continue the ongoing work cut short by the original deadlines of Assembly.

4. After discussion with the Secretariat, and the leadership of the SPRWG, I will task the SPRWG to "...develop methods for calculation of the Strategic Performance Indicators as outlined in the endorsed revision of the Strategic Plan..." as originally proposed by PRO 1.8 with the intention to amend the SPRWG chair's report for the forthcoming Assembly.

5. Current Council members are requested to consider or renew their commitment of participation on the work of the SPRWG and forward this message to the Secretary of the Working group until 15<sup>th</sup> May.

6. In order to be prepared at the Assembly and to gain Council endorsement for the amended SPI for the Strategic Plan in November at C-4, the proposed methodology of calculation of SPI and targets will be made available to the current Council Members in advance of the two events.

7. In the context of the back-to-back 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IHO Assembly and 4<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting, the preparation of the agenda and proposals for the Council will be done in the course of actions prior to the events. A preliminary agenda with a focus on the implementation of the anticipated directions to be received from A-2 will be distributed in accordance with Council ROP Rule 3, based on the proposals made in ACL 17 and ACL 19.

8. The term of my service in my home assignment is scheduled to end in September, 2020. In the event that I am no longer a representative of the United States, the chairmanship of the current Council will pass to the Vice Chair, Admiral Palmer (Brazil). The reporting task to the Assembly will be passed to Admiral Palmer. If he will be unable to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Assembly, the IHO Secretary-General stands ready to take over in his duty as Council Secretary on my behalf.

9. While the Secretariat has developed a detailed plan on how to manage the tasks of the Assembly, the Council and the subordinate bodies in the course of the year, the precise development of the situation remains unpredictable. In order to maintain the ongoing supervision of the IHO work programme and the operation of the Secretariat, the Secretary-General and myself are of the view that the community of the IHO Member States shall undertake steps for the establishment of a new Council to be ready to act immediately after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Assembly. Almost all of the 15 Regional Hydrographic Commissions have already designated the Member States who will have a seat at the Council (from C-4 to C-6). The table of tonnage to be used to identify the Council Members taking a Council seat according to the hydrographic interests has been published as CL 52/2019. Therefore, the IHO Secretariat will soon be in the position to issue a Circular Letter seeking the approval of the Member States to set up a new Council which will be formally installed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Assembly for the 4<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting. This new final Council Membership List will however be subject to the positive decision for accession of any new Member State until the penultimate day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Assembly qualifying for one of the 10 seats according to its tonnage.

10. Also by anticipation of the correspondence approval of PRO1.6 and in application of the intended procedures, the election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair can start before the event of the Assembly and the Council planned in November. The new elected-Chair and Vice Chair will take over from myself and Admiral Palmer when appropriate in advance of C-4.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shep M. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and a distinct "M".

Shep Smith  
Council Chair