

STATUTES OF THE IHO HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION ON ANTARCTICA (HCA)
(As approved by correspondence, following HCA-17, VTC, 14 June 2021)

Article 1

GENERAL

1.1 The Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA or the Commission) is a unique Regional Hydrographic Commission (hereinafter RHC) recognized by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) as stated by ARTICLE 8 (a) of the International Hydrographic Organization's General Regulations. The HCA is established in conformity with IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended "Establishment of Regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHC)" (Appendix A) and shall be governed according to these statutes. The Commission should provide, in pursuance of the resolutions and recommendations of the IHO, and the Antarctic Treaty System, regional coordination in the provisioning of hydrographic services, freedom of scientific investigation, cooperation, free exchange of, and access to, scientific observations in support of safe maritime navigation and for broad scientific use.

1.2 ARTICLE 8 (a) of the International Hydrographic Organization's General Regulations states that RHCs are regional bodies, established by IHO Member States and recognized by the IHO Assembly to improve regional coordination, enhance exchange of information and foster training and technical assistance. Additionally, ARTICLE 8 (e) stipulates the membership requirements for RHCs, including the HCA.

1.3 The Antarctic Treaty and related agreements, collectively known as the Antarctic Treaty System, provide a legal framework for international relations with respect to Antarctica, Earth's only continent without a native human population. The Treaty applies to the area south of 60° South Latitude, including all ice shelves and islands. The principle aims of the Antarctic Treaty System, of interest to the IHO, are the focus on cooperative relations with International Organizations, scientific research and the free exchange of data.

1.4 The geographic limits of the HCA are defined by the IHO International (INT) Charting Scheme Region M. The geographic limits of this region are illustrated at Appendix B.

Article 2

MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Full Membership is reserved for IHO Member States whose governments have acceded to the Antarctic Treaty and contribute resources to the provision of hydrographic data, products and services supporting marine safety of navigation within, and/or the wider use of marine geospatial information of the Antarctic region.

2.2 Associate Membership is open to any non-IHO Member State who are Antarctic Treaty Contracting Party, and other States which contributes resources and/or data to IHO INT Chart and ENC coverage of Region M, and which becomes a signatory to the Statutes of the HCA. Associate Members may take part in the discussions but shall not have voting rights, except as contained in Articles 4.2.

2.3 Other States and international organizations active in the region may be invited by the HCA to participate as Observers. Observer status is available to organizations and

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individual experts having professional involvement in marine data, products or services in Region M, either by contributing to those activities, or by providing support to those activities, or as users of derived products. The Observers may take part in HCA discussions, but shall not have voting rights as per ARTICLE 8 (e) of the IHO General Regulations.

Article 3

AIMS

The mission of the HCA is:

“To achieve the improvement of the quality, coverage and availability of nautical charting and other hydrographic information and services covering the region”

This mission will be achieved by the following aims:

3.1 The Commission, which is an integral element in achieving the objectives of the IHO and which promotes the aims of the Organization at the regional level, shall have an advisory, scientific and technological character. Activities shall complement the work of the IHO Secretariat, align with and support the intent and objectives of the approved IHO Work Programme, and shall not extend to matters concerning international political issues.

3.2 The HCA will endeavor to align its mission activities to the intent of the IHO Strategic Plan, IHO Resolution 2/1997 and the Antarctic Treaty System. Freedom of scientific investigation and cooperation, and free exchange of and access to scientific observations and results are considered key objectives of the HCA.

3.3 To promote technical co-operation in the domain of hydrographic surveying, marine cartography, and nautical information within the region.

3.4 To stimulate the Full Members, Associate Members, and Observers forming the HCA to widen hydrographic activity in the region in accordance with relevant Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) Resolutions (Appendix C). Encourage them to seek technical advice and assistance from the IHO Secretariat in establishing and strengthening their hydrographic capabilities and policies, including the acquisition of scientific, commercial and crowdsourced survey resources and all types of advancing technology designed for systematic survey.

3.5 To facilitate the exchange of information between Hydrographic Authorities and with other organizations concerning surveys, research or scientific, technical and operational developments regarding marine information broadly, and, to aid in the planning and organization of hydrographic activities in the widest sense of the term.

3.6 To encourage Full Members, Associate Members and Observers forming the HCA to participate actively, of their own free will, on all possible occasions – whether in the form of advice or of assistance – in those hydrographic programmes requiring concerted action, but without prejudice to or interference with their national activities.

3.7 To examine the implications, in its area of interest, of matters of general interest with which the IHO is concerned, avoiding any interference with the prerogatives of the IHO Secretariat and any other Regional Commissions recognized by the IHO.

3.8 To coordinate INT chart and ENC schemes, and other developing universal

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hydrographic data model (S-100) data, products and services for the region and to monitor their suitability.

3.9 To define the needs for new surveys and if necessary to develop co-operative approaches to meet those needs.

3.10 To facilitate the provision and wide dissemination of information for scientific purposes and to consider the potential of Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) concepts for regional implementation.

3.11 To align regional activities with the approved IHO Strategic Plan and Work Programme, taking into account the actions, recommendations and outcomes of the IRCC.

3.12 The HCA may establish committees or working groups as appropriate, to advance regional priorities. If created, subordinate bodies will have approved Terms of Reference, and progress work under the direction of the HCA. Participation within the subordinate bodies will be open to participants of the HCA and other Subject Matter Experts (SME)s as decided by the Full Members.

Article 4

CONFERENCES

4.1 The HCA shall meet in plenary conference in the country of one of its Full Members or Associate Members, or such other venue as may be selected, at least once between two successive ordinary sessions of the IHO Assembly. Members may hold the HCA conference, and informal discussions, via VTC connections by agreement.

4.2 At the end of each conference the Full Members, Associate Members and Observers desirous of hosting the following conference shall put forward their candidatures. Consideration should include locations that collocate the HCA with other international Antarctic discussion venues associated with the Antarctic Treaty System. Priority shall be given to a country that has not yet hosted a conference, or to the one that did so the longest time ago. In cases of equal priority, a vote shall be held, with the decision being taken by a simple majority of Full Members and Associate Members present.

4.3 Full Members and Associate Members should designate an official representative, preferably the head of a hydrographic office, or where such services do not exist, by heads of national authorities responsible for hydrography and navigation. They may be accompanied by advisors, but it is most desirable that their number be kept to a minimum.

4.4 The presence of at least half of the Full Members of the HCA shall constitute a quorum at all conferences.

4.5 The Chair shall invite the Chairs of adjacent RHCs to send representatives to attend the Commission conferences as Observers if appropriate. Any Member or Associate Member may propose to the Chair the invitation of technical experts as Observers.

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Article 5

CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND SECRETARIAT

5.1 The activities of the Commission shall be conducted by the Chair, who shall be the Secretary-General of the IHO or a Director of the IHO, appointed by the Secretary General of the IHO. The Chair shall also preside over the conference.

5.2 The Chair shall be assisted by a Vice-Chair from a Full Member of the HCA. At the conclusion of the first Conference after each IHO Assembly, the Vice-Chair shall be elected by a simple majority of those Full Members present, and serve until the conclusion of the first Conference after the next IHO Assembly.

5.3 The IHO Secretariat shall provide the Secretariat for the Commission. The Chair will prepare a Provisional Agenda for the next conference and will present, as the first item, his report on the activities of the Commission since the last conference.

5.4 The Chair will report the activities and future plans of the HCA to the relevant bodies of the IHO. Between sessions, reports of studies or other activities, which may be considered of general interest to all IHO Member States, should be reported through the Chair to the IHO Secretariat for general dissemination.

Article 6

ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCES

6.1 The Chair shall issue invitations at least four months before the conference.

6.2 Proposals to be included in the agenda of a conference shall be sent to the Chair and Secretary at least three months before the date fixed for the opening of the conference.

6.3 The Chair shall prepare the Provisional Agenda in consultation with the Vice-Chair and host nation, and forward it to the participants at least six weeks before the opening of the conference.

6.4 The Chair shall be responsible for the organization of the conference in conjunction with the Vice-Chair and meeting host.

6.5 The host nation shall provide the Rapporteur and the secretarial facilities for the conference.

6.6 The host shall be responsible for the expenses of the conference except those expenses described in Article 6.8 below.

6.7 The host will assist with the arrangement of authorizations and visas, so as to facilitate attendance at the conference.

6.8 All expenses connected with the participation of the Chair and the delegates in the conference shall be defrayed by their respective organizations.

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Article 7

CONFERENCE AGENDA

7.1 The Agenda shall be adopted by the HCA at the beginning of each conference.

7.2 The HCA may modify in the course of the conference the order in which Agenda items are to be discussed.

Article 8

DECISIONS

8.1 Decisions taken during each conference should be prepared in written form by the Chair and presented the next day to the participants present.

8.2 At the end of the conference, the Chair shall circulate the decisions taken during the conference. These decisions shall be adopted by means of a simple majority of the members present. Votes in favor shall be indicated by a show of hands unless a secret ballot is requested by any Member present. However, when the Chair, or a majority of Members present, decide that the decision so requires, the decision shall be made by correspondence. Such decision will be approved by a simple majority of the Members who have responded by the due date, provided that the number of votes received is at least equal to the quorum indicated in Article 4.5.

8.3 Only Full Members are entitled to vote, each having the right to one vote. The exception to this rule is found at Articles 4.2.

8.4 All decisions become operative immediately unless decided otherwise.

8.5 The Chair shall dispatch within one month of the close of the conference a copy of the Summary Report containing the discussions, decisions and recommendations of the conference for verification or comment, to each Full Member, Associate Member, and Observer. Comments are to reach the Chair within one month of the receipt of the Summary Report. The final version of the Minutes shall be forwarded within four months of the close of the conference.

8.6 Any decision, which may be of interest to the IHO Member States as a whole, shall be brought to the attention of the IHO Secretariat. This fact shall be mentioned as part of the text of the decisions reached.

Article 9

EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

9.1 By majority agreement of the Full Members, the Chair may call a meeting of the HCA when their representatives are assembled for a session of the IHO Assembly or IHO Council inviting others qualified to attend as Observers. The Chair may also propose a meeting or VTC when agreed by majority of Full Members.

9.2 In the case of urgent matters, which cannot be treated by correspondence, VTC or other scheduled event, and which cannot be postponed until the next conference, the Chair, with majority agreement of the Full Members, may request that an extraordinary meeting be held in a place considered most appropriate.

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9.3 The provisions applicable to the conference shall apply to all extraordinary meetings.

9.4 When these extraordinary meetings do not meet quorum and number of votes for decisions as per Sections 4.5 and 8.2, the decisions reached shall be circulated to all Full Members for comment prior to being taken. All decisions shall be reported by correspondence.

Article 10

STATUTES

10.1 The IHO Secretariat shall be the custodian of these Statutes.

10.2 Members of the HCA may propose amendments to the Statutes. The Chair shall submit the proposal(s) to all Members for decision at conference, or voting via CL. Two-thirds (2/3) of Full Members of the HCA is required for approval. If an amendment is approved, the Chair will update the Statutes and circulate them to all Full Members, Associate Members, and Observers.

10.3 Updated versions of the IHO and ATCM resolutions will be added to the Statutes as appropriate by the Chair without the approval of the Members of the HCA. The changes would not constitute formal amendments to the Statutes.

Article 11

LANGUAGE OF THE HCA

11.1 The working language of the HCA shall be English.

Approved by the Commission at the IHB, Monaco, September 2003

Amendments approved at the HCA-7, Buenos Aires, Argentina, October 2007

Amendments approved at the HCA-12 Montevideo, Uruguay, October 2012

Amendments approved at the HCA-13, Cádiz, Spain, December 2013

Amendments approved at the HCA-14 Tromsø, Norway, June 2016

Amendments approved by correspondence, following HCA-17, VTC, 14 June 2021

Annex: Signature Pages

Appendices:

A. Resolution 2/1997 of the IHO, as amended

B. Geographic Limits of IHO INT, Chart Region M

C. Resolutions 5 of the 31st Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting 2008, 5 of the 37th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting 2014 and 6 of the 42nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting 2019

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