

4. REPORT OF THE EASTERN ATLANTIC HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (EAthC)

1. Chair:

Okafor Chukwuemeka Ebenezer (NG): October 2018 till date
 Juan A. Aguilar Cavanillas (SP): October 20, 2016 to October, 2018
 Abdelouahed Dihaji (MA): September 18, 2014 to October 20, 2016
 Bruno Frachon (FR): November 16, 2012 to September 18, 2014
 Agostinho Ramos da Silva (PT): to November 16, 2012

Vice-chair:

15th meeting: Okafor Chukwuemeka Ebenezer (NG)
 14th meeting: Juan A. Aguilar Cavanillas (SP)
 13rd meeting: AbdelouahedDihaji (MA)
 12nd meeting: Bruno Frachon (FR)

2. Membership:

Members: Cameroon, France, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Spain.

Associate members: Benin, Cabo Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo

Observers: Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, UK, USA.

3. Meetings:

Next meeting: 16th EAthC; 28 September – 2 October 2020 in Lisbon (PT)

15 th meeting:	Lagos (NG),	17 – 19 October 2018
14 th meeting:	Cádiz (SP),	18 - 20 October 2016
13 rd meeting:	Casablanca (MA),	16 – 18 September 2014
12 nd meeting:	Lisbon (PT),	14 – 16 November 2012

4. Agenda Items:

According to the 3-year work plan 2018-2020, execution of the CB activities in the region since the last session of the Assembly has been encouraging thus far. Of particular note was the execution and plans of high-level and technical visits such as the visits to regional training centres to find synergies in support of the CB plans. Most recently, the joint IALA-IHO workshop for capacity-building in hydrography and marine aids to navigation, which geared its efforts towards Risk Assessment, Survey Specifications and AtoN Maintenance was organized between October 21st and 24th 2019 and hosted in Rabat by the Directorate of Ports and Maritime Public Domain with the support of the Hydrography, Oceanography and Cartography Division of the Royal Moroccan Navy. Other CB activities in the future include Technical Visit to Congo and Togo in 2020. Having these seminars and technical visits would prove beneficial to the EAthC where coastal states would be informed of their international obligations, the need for better cooperation within the region and the value of their hydrographic information.

The 15th EAthC meeting considered how the IHO CB Programme can support coastal states to prepare for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Member State Audit Scheme (IM-SAS) with respect to the provision of hydrographic services. The status and implementation of the regional INT and ENC charting schemes were presented by the regional coordinator for Region G (France) including the process for monitoring and managing charts and the chart

schemes. These schemes were also reviewed by the Regional G International Charting Coordination Working Group (G-ICCWG).

The 9th meeting of the Worldwide ENC Database Working Group (WENDWG) took place in Brest, France, hosted by SHOM, from 26 to 28 February 2019 in conjunction with the 4th joint meeting of the Regional ENC Coordinating Centres (RENC), IC-ENC, PRIMAR and, for the first time, the EA-RECC (Regional ENC Coordination Centre) of the East Asia Hydrographic Commission. Several actions were agreed to assess the feasibility of the operational implementation of the IHO Resolution 1/2018 - Elimination of overlapping ENC data in areas of demonstrable risk to the safety of navigation, noting that in some Charting Regions the situation is not improving. The RENCs will try, for instance, to improve their tracking and accounting procedures, in support of ENC Producers and RHCs, while the IHO Secretariat is now preparing the commissioning of the enhanced version of the INTToGIS system (INTToGIS II), which includes an ENC overlap checker function. However, concerns were raised in terms of coverage; UB1 and UB2 coverage considered as completed, but persistent gaps over Northwest coast of Africa in Band 3 and still few maritime approaches covered in band 4. There has been very slight improvement in the coverage of ports in the African sub-region (UB5 & UB6).

5. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed:

Challenges faced in the EAtHC region are linked to the exploitation of marine resources, risk prevention in highly humanized areas exposed to increasing hazards and maritime delineation issues. Hydrographic services remain globally far behind in most of the Central & Western African coastal states within the EAtHC region. The difficulty involved in getting most Governments in the region to appropriate funds for development and sustainability of Hydrography remains one of the major challenges in the region. Hence, there is need for increased advocacy in this regard until improvement is achieved. Going by the accomplishments of the 3-year work plan 2018-2020, thus far, there has been a number of successful Capacity Building (CB) initiatives in the region, however, there is no commensurate development in hydrographic practice within the region. It would be worthy to note that awareness has increased, including at the highest political level in Nigeria, who developed its MSI facilities and charting capabilities after attending relevant workshop/training facilitated by the IHO. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done as more than 85 percent of countries in the region still depend on third party to fulfill their national obligations and most of them are not yet members of the IHO, though being members of the IMO.

6. Achievements/outputs/conclusions:

There has been remarkable improvement in hydrographic awareness within the region most especially in Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, DRC and Guinea which all show increased awareness. On 29 August 2019, vide IHO CL 41/2019, it was announced that the Republic of Ghana has become the 92nd Member State of the International Hydrographic Organization. This shows the increasing efforts of the EAtHC towards the greater involvement of the Coastal States primarily concerned by the development of their hydrographic services. In terms of development of MSI capacity, Ghana, with the assistance of Denmark, established a MSI system, while Nigeria established its MSI Portal and commenced collaboration with France for its broadcast. Liberia has commenced training of an MSI National Coordination and intends to promulgate its MSI via Safety Net in future.

It is worthy to note that Nigeria has attained Phase 3 of CB strategy by producing its first Nautical Chart early 2019. This is an encouraging step as Nigeria and Morocco are demonstrating exemplary hydrographic capacity development as well as awareness. Therefore, both member states should play an increasingly active role for the benefit of West and Central African coastal states, sharing their experience and providing training capacities and training opportunities.

EAtHC appears to have understood the importance of Hydrography, however, more encouragements and collaborative activities need to be intensified so as to maintain the tempo.

7. Actions required by the Assembly:

Note the report of the Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission.