

**23<sup>rd</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE MESO AMERICAN  
CARIBBEAN SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (MACHC)  
Update on the Work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)  
Delivered by the IMO's Regional Coordinator Caribbean**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1 This document provides an update on the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the context of hydrographic matters out of material decisions of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) and the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) and the Carib-SMART Preparatory Phase Project in the Caribbean.

## **E-NAVIGATION**

2 With regard to e-navigation, you may be aware that the IMO's E-navigation strategy implementation plan (SIP) is intended to enhance berth-to-berth navigation and related services for safety of navigation and security at sea and protection of the marine environment, document MSC.1/Circ.1595 refers. In that context, the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at its 101<sup>st</sup> session adopted resolution MSC.467(101) *Guidance on the definition and harmonization of the format and structure of maritime services in the context of e-navigation* to ensure that Maritime Services are implemented internationally in a standardized and harmonized format.

3 MSC 101 agreed to consolidate the descriptions of Maritime Services and to consider them together with all involved international organizations and interested Member States to harmonize the provision and exchange of maritime information and data and invited Member States and international organizations, acting as domain coordinating bodies, to submit descriptions of Maritime Services to the Organization, taking into account the guidance provided in the resolution.

4 Additionally, MSC.1/Circ.1610 *Initial descriptions of Maritime Services in the context of e-navigation* was approved. The circular constitutes the first draft of Maritime Service descriptions, and it is an initial contribution for the harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Services. The initial descriptions of Maritime Services are expected to be periodically updated, taking into account developments and related work on harmonization.

5 Interested Member States, international organizations and other stakeholders are invited to contribute to the work on harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Services, either through the IMO or through the relevant domain coordinating bodies. Member States and international organizations are invited to bring the Initial descriptions to the attention of those responsible for the development or implementation of Maritime Services.

6 The circular is currently under review by the FAL Committee and the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the NCSR Sub-Committee will consider proposals for updating the definitions of maritime services contained in the circular.

## **ECDIS**

7 It may be recalled that performance standards for ECDIS are set out in resolution MSC.232(82). Following a revision of the resolution, MSC 106 at its session which ended on 11 November 2022, adopted resolution MSC.530(106) – *Performance Standards for Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS)* which will provide a phased implementation of new IHO standards applicable to ECDIS and invited IHO to keep IMO informed on the process development of the IHO S-100 framework standard.

8 Additionally, MSC 106 also approved a revision of MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1 ECDIS – Guidance for Good Practice, which will be published as MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.2. This guidance is intended to assist smooth implementation of ECDIS and its ongoing safe and effective use on board ships. Ship operators, masters and deck officers on ECDIS-fitted ships are encouraged to use this guidance to improve their understanding and facilitate safe and effective use of ECDIS.

## **Carib-SMART Preparatory Phase Project**

9 Addressing the Caribbean specifically, drawbacks in the implementation of IMO Instruments and the Regional Safety Codes have long been considered as constraints to safe, efficient, and reliable transport of goods across the region. Low levels of implementation of the nine mandatory IMO Member State Audit Scheme Instruments, including those for marine protection, liability and compensation, and the Regional Codes remain. In that regard, Caribbean IMO Member States invited the IMO to allocate funding to initiate a regional legal, policy and institutional reform (LPIR) project.

10 The International Maritime Organization launched the Norwegian funded Carib-SMART Preparatory Phase Project in April this year. The Project seeks to develop, design and secure regional endorsement, at the level of CARICOM, for a long-term technical assistance Programme for thirteen small island developing states of the Caribbean region.

11 The Programme is expected to enable Caribbean SIDS to build-back better from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic through the development and implementation of a **Sustainable Maritime Transport (SMART)** system. The Project addresses existing legal, policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks and their significant and common challenges, particularly, in relation to the implementation of key IMO instruments and the regional safety codes.

- 12 The material activities which form part of the Carib-SMART Workplan include:
- .1 A series of national and regional level consultations identifying needs and gaps for maritime sectors of Caribbean SIDS, bearing in mind the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the sector. These are intended to identify opportunities to build back better through developing and/or strengthening national maritime policies in line with IMO regulations and requirements, IMSAS findings and country priorities.
  - .2 Design of the essential components of a long-term Technical Assistance Programme to develop and implement a regional-level sustainable maritime transport system.
  - .3 Detailed design of the first project component on LPIR building the foundation for the SMART system, identifying suitable strategic partners and potential donors for the Programme and seeking the political commitment for the Programme at the level of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).
- 13 Critical outputs of the Preparatory Phase are:
- .1 A Survey Questionnaire to Maritime Transport Stakeholders, launched on 16 June 2022, which closed on 8 July 2022;
  - .2 National and Sub-regional Needs Assessment Reports – in process and due for finalization this week;
  - .3 A Regional Needs and Gap Assessment Report Roadmap to be followed by an Action Plan to be considered by key representatives and decision makers this quarter; and
  - .4 A Technical Cooperation Programme and Donor Financing Plan which identifies and quantifies country co-financing to be reviewed by the region at the ministerial level are also to be developed.
- 14 Preliminary indications are that legal and regulatory issues, gaps in reporting obligations, unfulfilled training and certification requirements, legislative drafting drawbacks and less than effective institutional structures, remain the root causes of many Member States' inability to implement key IMO Conventions and the regional Codes.
- 15 To address this, each State needs to prioritise the Conventions and Instruments that have not been ratified or acceded to, identify the underlying interests and policy determinants of each, and benchmark clear indicators for measuring how each is implemented. New trends and causative regional and national factors need to be identified, and where Instruments have been brought into force nationally, periodic reviews will be required to ensure that they remain relevant and enforceable.