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**GMA International Workshop**

**A regular process for the global reporting and assessment of  
the state of the marine environment, including socio-  
economic aspects**

**Comments received on the draft document prepared by the Group  
of Experts**

*Summary*

The comments contained herein have been excised from the respective comments on the draft document prepared by the Group of Experts as contained in document A/AC.271/WP.1. These comments were submitted pursuant to paragraph 64 (b) of General Assembly resolution 58/240. The comments have been received from France, Iceland, New Zealand, Pakistan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. They were also received from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Hydrographic Bureau on behalf of the International Hydrographic Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Ocean Institute. The comments in extenso are available on the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea web site (<http://www.un.org/depts/los/index.htm>).

## **I. Comments by States**

### **A. France**

1. The process leading to the establishment of the mechanism, based on General Assembly texts and resolutions, can hardly be challenged. Moreover, the mechanism has a legitimate goal: to make available reliable and objective information on the state of the global marine environment.

2. Nevertheless, the proposal reveals a complex and cumbersome edifice, designed to rely on regional or national structures, whereas competent organizations already exist at the regional level, as follows: North-East Atlantic (Oslo and Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic), Baltic Sea (Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea (Helsinki Convention)), Caribbean (Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)), Mediterranean (Mediterranean Action Plan), Pacific (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme) and Indian Ocean (Nairobi). Hence, the added value of the new structure seems limited, especially considering the estimated operating costs of the mechanism, which is nearly \$40 million for five years, excluding the capacity-building programme.

3. It thus appears to be preferable, for reasons of efficiency and economy, to rely on what already exists, strengthening the instruments developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and perhaps establishing a coordinating body for them within UNEP, while awaiting the future environmental governance structure to which we aspire.

### **B. Iceland**

4. Iceland attaches high hopes to the Global Marine Assessment (GMA). This process has the potential to contribute in a major way to sustainable development, providing the international community with the means to monitor and assess the state of the marine environment in a regular and orderly fashion.

5. In Iceland's view, the main objective of the GMA should be to improve our knowledge on trends in marine pollution and physical degradation in the marine environment and provide clear guidance to Governments on priority issues to mitigate these impacts. In that light, Iceland regards the GMA as a suitable forum for implementing article 200 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

6. The report, contained in document A/AC.271/WP.1, forms a good basis for an exchange of views among Governments at the international workshop. At the same time, Iceland is concerned, among other things, about the unfocused way an assessment of the state of living marine resources has been included in the report.

7. The decision to establish the regular process was built on the widely shared acknowledgement that the marine environment is particularly vulnerable to physical degradation and pollution. Iceland welcomed the early focus in GMA discussions on marine pollution and continues to regard that issue as a GMA priority.

8. Iceland recognizes the growing interest in applying the ecosystem approach to an assessment of the state of the marine environment. This would require the GMA to embrace all dimensions of marine ecosystems, including the physical and chemical environment, biota and socio-economic aspects.

9. At the global level, such efforts regarding the living marine resources are already being addressed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), building as appropriate on the contribution of relevant regional and national actors. A separate and duplicating effort within the framework of GMA could deflect attention and much needed resources from such priority challenges as the physical degradation and pollution of the marine environment. Thus, Iceland sees little or no “value added” in including the state of marine living resources in the scope of the GMA.

10. Furthermore, the GMA reports should be subject to a review by Governments. This is an important component of the quality assurance. Arrangements should be made for taking full account of government comments prior to the completion of the report.

11. Paragraph 46 refers to the reporting of GMA to Governments through the United Nations General Assembly “on its activities”. It is not clear, however, how the output of GMA will be presented to Governments. Paragraph 38 on budgetary considerations refers to the need to invest in “adequate coordination, synthesis, review, and dialogue with policy makers”. We suggest that this be done through the General Assembly and the informal consultative process. The main conclusions and policy recommendations should be presented to Governments and approved by consensus.

12. Similarly, the informal consultative process should be drawn on in an advisory capacity for the GMA in preparing each regular assessment.

### **C. New Zealand**

13. New Zealand is supportive of the establishment of a Global Marine Assessment (GMA) and we agree that such an assessment is urgently needed.

14. We agree with the goals and scope as outlined in the paper. We agree that the GMA should build on existing work and institutions where possible.

15. New Zealand agrees that the GMA should cover the oceans from coastal waters to ocean basins.

16. New Zealand believes that fisheries information and issues should be included in the GMA. We believe that the meaning and substance of the GMA would be greatly diminished in the absence of fisheries information and issues.

17. New Zealand would prefer the GMA to have a centralized rather than regional approach. We note that the current proposal is heavily weighted towards a regional approach. We believe this is less than desirable, as a regional approach could result in inconsistencies and gaps in information with regard to straddling, highly migratory or cosmopolitan species. If a centralized approach is adopted, then consideration should be given to building the global assessment from a set of areas with ecologically defined boundaries, perhaps ocean-basin based.

18. Given the emphasis on a regional approach we suggest that there will need to be in-depth discussion around the creation/definition of appropriate regions. In particular, coverage of high seas areas and areas of overlapping jurisdiction are of concern. Large Marine Ecosystems, which have been put forward as a possible candidate for regional boundaries, appear to be limited in coverage and largely restricted to continental shelves, leaving the issue of the high seas unresolved.

19. We are also concerned that the regional approach would be expensive and administratively difficult. New Zealand's area of regional interest, the south-west Pacific, is a vast area of ocean that is sparsely populated by small Pacific Island countries and territories, many with limited resources and expertise. In considering appropriate regional governance for our area of interest a geopolitical boundary may be more appropriate than a purely ecological boundary, for instance the secretariat of the Pacific Community/South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) area.

20. Related to the decision on regional boundaries will be the issue of governance and responsibility. This does not appear to have been well addressed in the paper. Again we reiterate that the approach needs to build on existing work and institutions.

21. The assessment of assessments could be expanded to look at lessons learned from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) process.

22. It is unclear why topical assessments might be considered part of the set-up phase of the GMA. The purpose of the topical assessments is not contained in the paper, which adds to the confusion. We suggest that the regular GMA process would facilitate and enable topical assessments and not be preceded by them. We suggest that topical assessments would largely vary between regions where threats and challenges to ocean management differ.

23. Underlying work to facilitate interpretation and understanding of suggested Topical Assessments could include:

(a) Development of ecosystem and trophic models with predictive capacity, integrated with socio-economic models (regional, ocean basin, global);

(b) Classification and characterization of marine habitats (oceanography (geophysical, chemophysical, hydrographical), biological composition, ecological function, and spatial and temporal distribution) mapped with spatial and temporal overlays of nature, extent and intensity of human induced stressors (see para. 23 of paper).

24. We agree that, given the regional approach, the GMA requires a common conceptual framework to foster comparability among the regional assessments. We are not sure that the themed approach is optimal, as it would not readily support an ecosystem-based assessment of key threats/management priorities. Perhaps consideration could be given to the development of an agreed set of minimum data and information requirements, along with agreed standards.

25. The above approach would also facilitate the development of the GMA as an online system, either in the form of a centralized database or as a portal to a cluster of regional or even local databases. In order to avoid extra costs it is important not to require that material be presented in forms that necessitate transformation from existing database formats, although advances in the development of a marine

extensible mark-up language (XML) will facilitate the exchange of marine data in different formats.

26. We generally agree with the proposed regular GMA process, with some reservations about the theme approach and the regional component as described above.

27. Initiatives of the central government of New Zealand that could contribute local information to the GMA include, but are not limited to, the Environmental Performance Indicators Programme, the Marine Environment Classification, the National Aquatic Biodiversity Information System and the oceans project to inform national priorities for management and research.

#### **D. Pakistan**

28. Pakistan is still in the process of collecting inputs from its relevant Ministries on the subject. However, as a specific issue to be addressed in the first assessment, it is proposed that a mention may be made of the disasters such as the accident of the *Tasman Spirit*, which grounded off the coast of Karachi causing an oil spill of 30,000 tons and devastating marine life, recreational beaches and civic amenities in the affected area.

#### **E. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

29. The United Kingdom strongly supports the establishment of a regular global assessment and reporting process, which received endorsement from General Assembly resolution 57/141 in the light of the specific commitment at paragraph 36 (b) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. We see the proposed GMA as an important mechanism to enable policy makers and stakeholders generally to address the problems of the marine environment in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

30. We welcome the outcome of the Group of Experts meeting, which builds on the outcomes of the earlier Reykjavik and Bremen meetings, as well as the review by the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), as providing a very good basis for taking forward the establishment of the GMA in accordance with resolution 57/141.

31. We also welcome the convening of the GMA international workshop in conjunction with the forthcoming meeting of the Oceans Consultative Process in New York, 7 to 11 June. We see this as an opportunity for Governments, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders to consider in some depth the outcome of the Group of Experts meeting with a view to coming to a shared understanding of what the GMA process entails and to establishing successfully the process by the end of 2004 as envisaged in resolution 58/240. Indeed, we see it as very important that all those mentioned in resolution 57/141 play a full and active part in establishing the regular process, and the workshop and subsequent follow up can help ensure this.

32. In view of this, and because we will also want to discuss the issues with colleagues in the European Union, we offer the following general observations.

33. First, we welcome the approach of the report, which in our view covers much of what we consider to be the five key modal areas which need to be addressed in establishing the GMA:

- The definition and scope of the regular process
- Its relationship to ongoing assessment activities at the regional and international levels; the interaction with policy makers and stakeholders
- Institutional arrangements, including contributions from relevant organizations and agencies and programmes of the United Nations system and arrangements for a secretariat
- Capacity-building and effective participation of experts from developing countries.

34. Under these headings, which we think the report helpfully follows, we think there is much to commend in terms of more detailed areas, such as goals, scope, frequency, conceptual framework, themes, identification of regions, scenarios, coordination and scientific assessment.

35. We also welcome the concept of an initialization of the GMA through a two year start-up process based on an assessment of assessments. Indeed, we would emphasize the importance of seeing the GMA as an evolutionary process, which can develop and strengthen over time as the various stakeholders become more engaged with its work, realize the benefits and reorientate and develop programmes accordingly.

36. We would also underline a point that the United Kingdom, along with its European Union colleagues, has stressed, namely the vital importance of the GMA building on current regional assessments. We welcome, therefore, the parts of the report that emphasize this existing regional dimension. It follows that we are cautious about possible indications that additional structures and mechanisms, such as “GMA regions”, might be utilized. We look forward to clarifying this and other issues at the workshop.

37. On coordination and budgetary considerations, we welcome the perception of the GMA as fostering and relying on inter-agency coordination and cooperation and the need for appropriate commitment and buy in. We see the GMA as part of improving the way that agencies and donors can respond together more effectively to the identified needs of countries and so improve oceans governance at various levels. In this context, we would see the involvement of the newly established inter-agency oceans group (presented on behalf of the Secretary-General along with other recent changes in inter-agency cooperation at the recent session of the Commission on Sustainable Development) as providing important underpinning for GMA work.

38. On resources generally, we note the indicative budgets attached to the draft report. We recognize, as the report says, the difficulty and complexity of coming to such figures. We will have to look closely at these in the context of how the GMA might be established and taken forward. This in our view tends to underline the importance of an evolutionary approach to the establishment and structuring of the GMA, which will also enable resource issues to be seen in a similar, evolutionary light.

39. Finally, on the specific question you ask about issues that the first assessment should address, it follows from the above that we think this is something that would emerge from the assessment of the assessments. We would not want to encourage a shopping list.

## **F. United States of America**

40. We anticipate that the discussion of the GMA in conjunction with the upcoming United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on the Law of the Sea will be far-ranging. With that in mind, rather than suggesting specific comments on the experts' report that could easily be quickly overtaken by the upcoming discussions, we prefer to underscore the importance of directing the discussions themselves towards an outcome that will advance the development of the GMA. In this vein, the United States would particularly welcome work towards identifying and agreeing on the process by which the "assessment of assessments" would be started. We would welcome discussions of such issues as who will run the assessment of assessments, how will they be chosen and when will they begin their work.

41. With regard to the second question concerning specific issues that the first GMA might address, we think that discussion would be premature in June and could even detract from the overall establishment of the GMA. In short, we would prefer to allow the "assessment of assessments" to determine which specific issues might first be taken up, thus freeing our limited available discussion time to be concentrated on initiating a successful "assessment of assessments" and establishing an appropriately inclusive GMA.

## **II. Comments by a United Nations specialized agency and other inter-governmental organizations**

### **A. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

42. We note that the draft document provides very little specific reference to the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), and its possible role in, and contributions to the GMA.

43. Relevant key documentation on the GMA process prepared prior to the experts meeting did refer explicitly and specifically to GESAMP. Such key documentation includes:

- The reports of the meetings in Reykjavik in 2001 and Bremen in 2002
- The 2003 WCMC/UNEP/IOC survey of global and regional marine environmental assessments and related scientific activities
- The Secretary-General's report (A/58/423) to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly (8 October 2003) which described proposals for modalities for the GMA
- The consultants report, "Development of a United Nations Global Marine Assessment Programme" (March 2004), prepared for the purpose of the GMA experts meeting.

44. In addition, we note that GESAMP itself explicitly stated its interest in and preparedness to participate and contribute to the GMA process in its various phases of preparation and implementation. We refer to the relevant text in the 2003 report of the thirty-third session of GESAMP and, in particular, to annex V, containing the response of the Chair to the letter of the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of 25 February 2003 on the proposed modalities for GMA (see A/58/423, annex II, paras. 29-36).

45. We would like to reiterate FAO's statements in support of a major role of GESAMP in GMA, as communicated to the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in March 2003 (see A/58/423, annex II, paras. 15-17).

46. With the above in mind, and if possible, we would suggest that explicit and specific references be made (in future considerations and discussions) to the possible roles and contributions by GESAMP in various activities and panels described in the report of the GMA experts meeting. These possible involvements of GESAMP could include:

- Continued assistance in the design and start-up components for the GMA process
- Participation in the Global Scientific Assessment Panel
- Preparation of annual updates on the state of the marine environment
- Developing scoping studies and complete documents on topical assessments
- Scientific assistance, as required, to initiatives of design of regional assessments, including related capacity-building efforts
- Quality assurance, including peer review processes.

47. With regard to the general contents of the draft document, we do note the specific reference to the important paragraph 36 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, but feel that such specific and visible reference should also be made to relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. This could still be done by including these resolutions in annexes to the document.

48. It is noted that the report does not provide much guidance on the management and administration of information and knowledge generated by the various GMA efforts to be undertaken at regional and global levels. It is suggested that existing mechanisms, for example, the *United Nations Atlas of the Oceans*, be considered as the basis or reference for the development of a GMA information and knowledge management system.

49. We note that specific reference is made to fisheries and issues of interest to fisheries and FAO, such as in paragraphs 16 (topical assessments), 22 (themes), 23 (causes) and 24 (drivers).

50. We would like to recommend that anthropogenic and natural environmental effects on fisheries resources and associated ecosystems be considered top priority among the specific issues that should be addressed by the first assessment.



## **B. International Hydrographic Organization**

51. We believe the status of hydrography and nautical cartography to be an essential component in the assessment of the marine environment. An assessment of the adequacy of nautical charts for safe navigation will, to some measure, determine the character, volume and costs of shipping commerce. In this context, such an assessment would be a factor in evaluating the driving forces of shipping and port development cited in paragraph 24 of the draft document and is key in evaluating the sustainable development of the region. This assessment also provides an indication of the risk imposed by maritime operations on a particular ecosystem. Maritime operations and the resulting potential for groundings, collisions and other incidents are stressors that should be included in paragraph 23 of the draft document.

52. Additionally, hydrographic data should be an essential component in evaluating coastal zone development beyond port development. The scope and fidelity of hydrographic data constitute the spatial framework for other measurements to be referenced and an important boundary layer for dynamic modelling of ocean and coastal processes. Coastal and offshore engineering and pollution response plans require hydrographic data for sound management decisions.

53. With regards to the regional structure envisaged for the GMA process, the International Hydrographic Organization has 14 regional hydrographic commissions. The IHO resolution regarding regional hydrographic commissions is provided in annex I and the list of regional hydrographic commissions, their members and their geographical coverage, is provided in annex II. The GMA secretariat is welcome to use this model as it finds applicable.

54. IHO is engaged in a comprehensive revision of its special publication, "The Status of Hydrography and Nautical Cartography, Worldwide". This assessment will aid IHO in prioritizing its capacity-building efforts and will provide the decision makers of IHO member States an indication where their resources should be directed. The results of this revision will be available for the "assessment of assessments" and as a continually updated topical assessment contributing to the GMA.

55. Because of the fundamental and pervasive importance of hydrographic data and products, especially as the spatial framework for the marine environment, the ability of developing States to collect and maintain adequate hydrographic data should be included in capacity-building considerations in section V of the draft document. The fourth United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and Law of the Sea featured capacity-building for the production of nautical charts as one of its two specific agenda items. IHO welcomes this focus and encourages its extension by including the assessment of hydrographic data and products as an integral part of the GMA.

## **C. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development**

56. We are pleased to send you some information about the work of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that could be used in your regular reporting and assessment exercise:

(a) A biennial publication of the OECD Committee for Fisheries on “Review of Fisheries in OECD Countries”, which includes a socio-economic account of the state of the marine fishing sector in OECD countries;

(b) Substantive elements of the regular work programme of the OECD Committee for Fisheries, which surveys different aspects of fisheries management systems in OECD countries (current priority issues include: illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; government financial transfers; the use of economic instruments in fisheries management);

(c) Systematic review of marine issues in OECD Environment Performance Reviews, including examination of marine pollution originating from land, rivers and seas; prevention and mitigation of spills; management of marine resources (fisheries and others); and implementation of international commitments.

### **III. Comments by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat**

57. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Division for Sustainable Development, has followed closely the developments leading to the recommendation to establish a regular process for global marine assessments (GMA) since the inception of the discussion at the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999. From the seventh session through the technical workshops in Reykjavik (2001) and Bremen (2002), and finally the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, we have participated in all the relevant discussions leading to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and subsequent decisions of the General Assembly to establish a GMA process by 2004. The Department, therefore, is fully supportive of this goal as well as the excellent preparatory work that the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has undertaken in response to General Assembly resolutions 57/141 and 58/240. As you know, the senior officer for ocean issues in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs also participated in the Paris inter-agency consultations on the GMA organized last September. She also attended the Group of Experts meeting convened by the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in March 2004 as an observer. As a partner with the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in the substantive servicing of the General Assembly consultative process on oceans, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs looks forward to a full discussion of the draft document by member States and other stakeholders.

58. With regard to specific issues related to the development of the GMA process, it should be noted that, by nature of our mandates, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Commission on Sustainable Development will be more users of such assessments rather than producers, and therefore we will leave it to the experts in marine science to advise member States of the implications of the various options and conceptual frameworks discussed in the draft document. But with respect to the specific issues to be addressed by GMA, we would like to highlight the point made by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in its Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (see para. 36 (b)) and repeated in General Assembly resolution 57/141 (see para. 45) that the process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment should include “socio-economic

aspects, both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments”. Admittedly, this is a very large mandate, and an expansion of the scope of much if not all of the currently existing marine assessment work. We feel, however, that its importance is critical to the value of the GMA process.

59. It seems to us, therefore, that the draft report could indicate more clearly how socio-economic aspects would be addressed. For example, in the section “Framework and process”, a footnote to paragraph 8 explains that throughout the report, the term “scientific” includes both the natural and social sciences. We would like to suggest an expansion of the socio-economic aspects in the text itself. In paragraph 16, the list of “topical assessments” does include “Review of methodologies for the socio-economic valuation of marine ecosystem services”, however, this is indicated only as a possible issue, and is also not the overall socio-economic view intended by the GMA decision. We do note that “economic and social benefits and uses” is included as one of four general and overlapping themes listed in paragraph 22 (conceptual framework), but feel the importance given to this by member States at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and in the General Assembly requires more consideration earlier in the document.

#### IV. Comments by the International Ocean Institute

60. The International Ocean Institute (IOI) network will be capable of contributing to the assessment of the marine environment in several areas:

(a) **Training and capacity building;** IOI has a quarter of a century of experience in providing cost effective training and capacity-building programmes in all areas of science and policy. The IOI network has a proven track record of delivering thematic short courses on a multitude of topics. This capacity can be focused on the GMA in response to training and capacity-building needs at all levels both during the initial phase and the subsequent ones. Furthermore, the IOI ocean governance training programmes could dedicate a certain number of contact hours to GMA training as part of its comprehensive ocean governance curriculum. This activity, as well as the delivery of IOI GMA thematic courses, to be delivered at a regional and national level, would largely satisfy the requirement for a “permanent feature of the GMA, which is structured according to each region’s needs”;

(b) **Consultations with stakeholders through the initial phase and beyond;** through the international presence and well established network of the IOI, we are able to provide cost effective linkages between all constituents at all levels so as to assist in ensuring that the GMA is not only properly established but remains relevant to policy making. Working through our operational centres at the national and local levels, through our well established channels of communication with the United Nations system and many of the intergovernmental international and regional bodies, we can bring to the GMA a high degree of “ground truthing” in a credible and cost effective manner;

(c) **Implications of coastal and habitat degradation for human health, well being and safety;** the IOI network gained a reputation in providing advice to the Governments on regional capacity-building and security (e.g. for the Mediterranean and Caspian Seas), in organizing workshops and conferences on coastal areas integrated management, ecotourism and risk assessment. IOI will be

able to contribute to assessing the present state of coral reefs and economic and social benefits that the marine and coastal environment provides to society.

61. To sum up, we are waiting eagerly for a final document and expect that the cooperation between the United Nations and IOI will be extended to GMA activities. I noted with satisfaction a recommendation of the Group of Experts to call on national governments and non-governmental organizations to nominate potential peer reviewers to the GMA secretariat. The IOI network will be happy to support the programme by providing our knowledge and experience for the assessment.

## Annex I

### **Resolution of the International Hydrographic Organization on regional hydrographic commissions**

#### **Establishment of regional hydrographic commissions**

1. It is resolved that the Bureau of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) shall encourage Member States having common regional interests in data collecting or nautical charting to form regional hydrographic commissions to cooperate in the undertaking of surveys and other projects. As part of the International Hydrographic Organization, the commissions shall complement the work of the Bureau.
2. Regional hydrographic commissions are intended to provide, in pursuance of the resolutions and recommendations of IHO, regional coordination with regard to nautical information, hydrographic surveys, production of nautical charts and documents, training, technical cooperation and hydrographic capacity-building projects. They should enable the exchange of information and consultation between the hydrographic services concerned. Geographically adjacent commissions should liaise with each other.
3. Regional hydrographic commissions shall be properly constituted and have activities in line with the objectives of the IHO as described in article II of the Convention on the IHO and in accordance with the approved IHO work programme. Geographical areas of the RHC will normally coincide with international (INT) chart regions, modified as appropriate to meet regional requirements and special circumstances. There are special provisions for region M (Antarctica) owing to its special status.
4. Membership in regional hydrographic commissions may include full members, associate members and observers, all willing to contribute to the safety of navigation in the fields of hydrography, nautical charting, nautical information or navigational warnings in the region concerned. The roles of full members, associated members and observers will be defined by each regional commission.
  - Full membership is reserved for IHO member States within the region that sign the statutes of the regional commission
  - Associate membership is available to other IHO member States or States of the region that are non-IHO members, both being signatories of the statutes of the regional commission
  - Other States and international organizations active in the region concerned may be invited by the regional commission to participate as observers. The invitation procedures should be established by each commission.
5. The working languages used by the regional commissions shall be agreed upon by their members and designated to ensure the best communication between participants. The IHO reports and documents relating to the activities of regional commissions shall be in at least one of the official languages of IHO. For correspondence with the bureau, one of the official languages of IHO shall be used.

6. A representative of the Bureau shall be invited to attend meetings of regional commissions.

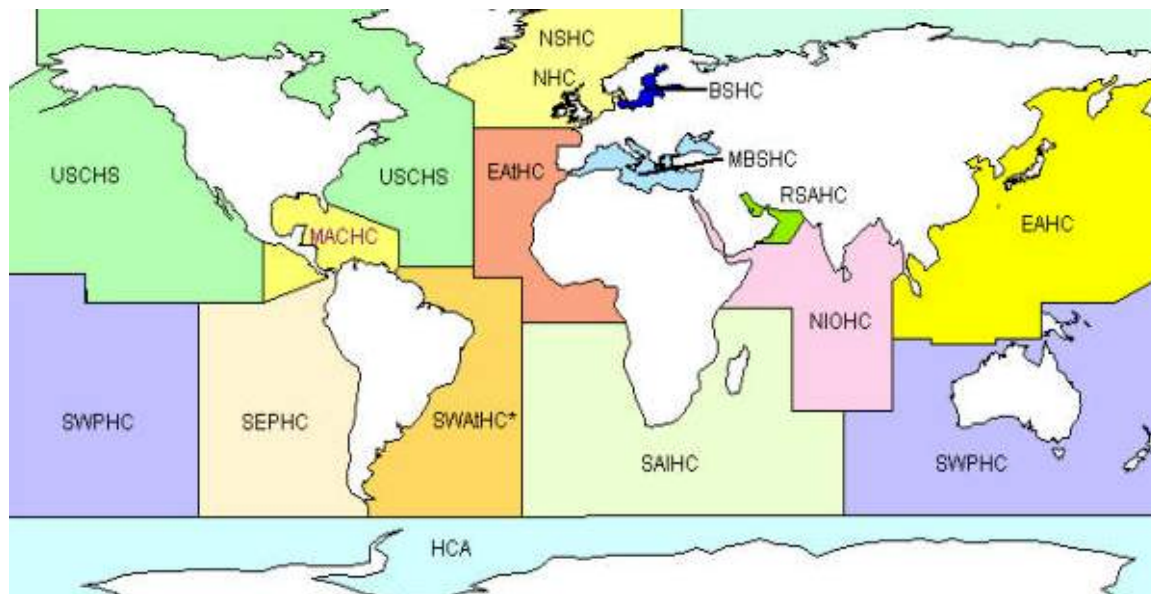
7. Regional hydrographic commissions shall regularly assess the hydrographic capacity and requirements within their region.

8. Chairs of regional hydrographic commissions shall report to the International Hydrographic Conference on the activities of the commissions, hydrographic capacity and requirements within their region, future plans and the agreed key targets that support the tasks of the commissions detailed in the IHO work programme. The Chairs of the regional hydrographic commissions shall also submit an annual report to the bureau of IHO indicating progress made against the agreed key targets in the IHO work programme for general dissemination. Between sessions of the International Hydrographic Conference, reports of studies or other activities, which may be considered of general interest to all IHO member States, shall be sent by chairs of the regional hydrographic commissions to the Bureau for general dissemination.

## Annex II

### Regional hydrographic commissions

The International Hydrographic Organization encourages the establishment of regional hydrographic commissions, and offers advice on their formation. To date, 15 such commissions, have been established, which meet at regular intervals to discuss issues of mutual hydrographic interest.



**South-West Atlantic Hydrographic Commission:** This Commission is in the process of being established. As soon as it has been officially established, the relevant information will be placed on the IHO web site and updated on a regular basis.

**Nordic Hydrographic Commission Members:** Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden.

**North Sea Hydrographic Commission Members:** Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom.

**East Asia Hydrographic Commission Members:** China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand.

**Observers:** Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, United Kingdom, United States of America.

**United States/Canada Hydrographic Commission Members:** United States of America, Canada.

**Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission Members:** Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Monaco, Morocco, Russian Federation, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia.

**Associate Members:** Bulgaria, Georgia, Israel, Malta, Palestinian Authority, Romania.

**Observers:** Albania, Germany, Lebanon, United Kingdom, United States of America, Department of Naval Architecture, Ocean and Environmental Engineering, International Marine Academy, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, PRIMAR.

**Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission Members:** Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden.

**Associate Members:** Latvia, Lithuania.

**Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission Members:** France, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Spain.

**Associate Members:** Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal.

**Observers:** United Kingdom, United States of America.

**South-East Pacific Hydrographic Commission Members:** Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru.

**Observers:** Panama.

**South-West Pacific Hydrographic Commission Members:** Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States of America.

**Meso American and Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Committee Members:** Colombia, Cuba, France, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela.

**Associate Members:** Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

**Southern Africa and Islands Hydrographic Commission Members:** France, Norway, Mozambique, Republic of South Africa, United Kingdom.

**Associate Members:** Angola, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Portugal, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania.

**North Indian Ocean Hydrographic Commission Members:** Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Kingdom.

**Associate Members:** France, Seychelles, United States of America.

**Observers:** Malaysia, Oman, Saudi Arabia.

**ROPME Sea Area Hydrographic Commission Members:** Bahrain, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates.

**Associate Members:** Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, United States.

**Observers:** Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, Middle East Navigation Service.

**IHO Hydrographic Committee on Antarctica Members:** Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian



Federation, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, United States of America (National Imaging and Mapping Agency and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

**Observers:** Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programmes, Standing Committee on Antarctic Logistics and Operations, International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators, Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, International Maritime Organization (IMO), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans, International Bathymetric Chart of the Southern Ocean, IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry, Australian Antarctic Division, Antarctica New Zealand.

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