

8th IHO-WEND Committee Meeting held in Tokyo, Japan



The 8th Worldwide Electronic Navigational Chart Database (WEND) Committee Meeting was held at the Japan Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department (JHOD) in Tokyo on March 5-6, 2004. Over sixty representatives of 27 Member States and, for the first time, Observers from non-governmental organizations and professional associations attended the meeting. As noted above, Observers were admitted to the proceeding for the first time. The Committee noted that the WEND Terms of Reference (TORs) and Rules of Procedures (ROPs) do not provide for the attendance of observers while the CHRIS TORs/ROPs do.

With the recent additions to the WEND Principles to include user-friendliness and other customer oriented perspectives, the attendance of industry organizations – especially the shipping industries – seemed appropriate. The SPWG has formulated criteria whereby Non-governmental International Organizations (NGIO) can apply for accreditation as Observers to the IHO. As an interim process, the Committee decided to circulate for approval a change to the WEND ROPs that would mirror the CHRIS ROPs regarding observers.



The meeting dealt with several substantial issues: offering clarification on two items in the WEND Principles, proposing changes to the WEND Rules of Procedure, discussing whether ECDIS operating in RCDS mode should meet IMO chart carriage requirements and reviewing the actions and recommendations of the WEND Task Group. The Reports from Member States and Regional Hydrographic Commissions reflect that progress continues in the production of ENC's but resources, be it manpower, funding or equipment, remain a limiting factor in achieving ENC coverage.

The WEND Task Group reported on its activity over the last nine months. The Task Group reported that the main problems preventing increase of ENC and ECDIS use are as follows:

- Insufficient coverage;
- Diversity in quality between Hydrographic Offices and
- Diversity in services between ENC providers.

What need to be addressed immediately are as follows:

- Completion of small scale ENC coverage;
- Prioritized ENC production programs for large scale coverage;
- Expanded ENC validation and distribution and
- Training and assistance in ENC production and maintenance.

A submission to the IMO from the Australian Maritime Safety Administration proposing that ECDIS operating in the RCDS mode, when ENC's are not available, meet the chart carriage requirements without accompanying paper charts was actively debated. It was noted that Norway intended to submit a proposal to IMO offering an alternative approach to increasing ECDIS use.

The Committee tasked the IHB to attempt to develop an IHO position in advance of discussion before IMO by circulating both the Australian and Norwegian proposals and requesting Member States comments.

The meeting adjourned with a tentative schedule for the 9th WEND meeting to be held before or after Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference, April 11-15, 2005, in Monaco.