

VISIT BY THE EAST ASIA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION
TO THE VIETNAM'S MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY No 2
VUNG TAU, VIETNAM
23 JUNE 2009



Vietnam, in order to better meet its obligations relating to nautical charting and hydrography and to promote navigational safety and protection of the marine environment, had expressed its desire to become a member of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the EAHC (East Asia Hydrographic Commission). The importance of Vietnam to the hydrographic fraternity lies in the fact that some of the major shipping routes pass through Vietnamese waters, including linking its ports to the others in the region.

Following up on an earlier visit to Vietnam's Maritime Safety Authority No 1 in Hai Phong in April 2008, an EAHC delegation visited Vietnam's Maritime Safety Authority No 2 in Vung Tau on 23 June 2009. The delegation was led by Singapore's Dr Parry Oei (Chairman of EAHC) and Thailand's Vice Admiral Nakorn Tanuwong (Vice-Chairman of EAHC) with representatives from China and the Republic of Korea met with representatives from both Authorities from Vietnam. The visit emphasised the importance the EAHC

placed in enlarging its membership to further enhance navigational safety in the region through building trust, cooperation and capacity building.

The purpose of the delegation's visit was threefold:

- a) to continue encouraging Vietnam to expedite the process to join the hydrographic fraternity through membership in both the IHO and the EAHC. The objective is for Vietnam to cooperate with the EAHC in regional nautical charting and hydrographic projects;
- b) to better understand Vietnam's nautical charting and hydrographic capabilities and how they could contribute to EAHC members' efforts to promote navigational safety and protection of the marine environment, in particular the improvement of ENC coverage in the region; and
- c) to introduce Vice Admiral Nakorn (Thailand) the present Vice Chairman, who would be taking over the Chairmanship from Dr Oei (Singapore) in Oct 2009 and to continue the work of facilitating Vietnam's entry to the IHO and the EAHC.

During the visit, EAHC learned that Vietnam had developed their own ENC production software and had used it to produce ENCs of the approaches to the port of Ho Chi Minh (Saigon). The ENCs had been validated by a third party, field checked and released for commercial use. Plans are in progress to produce ENCs of approaches to and waters of other major Vietnamese ports. At the meeting, Vietnam has welcomed the EAHC's delegation's proposal to include their ENCs in the EAHC Chart Catalogue.

In addition to installing and maintaining traditional aids to navigation, Vietnam has set up AIS base stations along the approaches to Ho Chi Minh port along the Mekong river to facilitate the monitoring of AIS-enabled ships.

To cement the cooperation between Vietnam and the EAHC, Dr Oei invited Vietnam to attend the upcoming EAHC capacity building training courses in August 2009 in the Philippines and the 10th EAHC Conference in October 2009 in Singapore as observers.

Noting Vietnam's capabilities and achievements, the IHO and EAHC would no doubt benefit by having Vietnam join as a valued member. We look

forward to the application of Vietnam's membership to the IHO and EAHC. In the interim period, we anticipate that the cooperative spirit between Vietnam and the EAHC demonstrated during the visit would lead to significant contributions to navigational safety and marine environmental protection in the region through Vietnam's participation in the EAHC's projects.

Reported by Chair (EAHC, Singapore)