REPORT

**on**

**the 15th session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue**

**(COMSAR)**



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Proposed agenda of the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunication and Search and Rescue, 16th session (12 – 16 March 2012)

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# 1. Introduction.

The 15th session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue was held at the IMO Headquarter in London during the period 7 to 11 March, 2011. It was attended by representatives from 70 Member States and 25 Observer Organizations. Jean-Charles Leclair was representing the Association.

The item of the agenda for the session of most interest to IALA members was the continuation of the development of the concept of e-navigation. The discussions were only based on the interim report produced by the IMO Correspondence Group. There was no other submission from Member States or Consultative Organisations. The main outcomes of COMSAR on the matter were the approval of IHO’s S-100 data model as a baseline for creating a framework for data access and information services under the scope of SOLAS, together with a proposal to MSC to establish a Harmonisation Group on Data Model. The Sub-Committee also approved the template proposed and improved by Korea for identifying practical e-Navigation solutions based on operational, technical, regulatory and training aspects.

The Sub-Committee continued its discussions on the way to revise the GMDSS, independently of the development of the e-Navigation concept. It was decided to create a correspondence group to continue the work intersessionally on the scoping exercise to establish the need for a review of the elements and procedures of the GMDSS.

**2. e-Navigation**

The Maritime Safety Committee at its 88th session (December 2010) endorsed the action taken by NAV 56 to re-establish the Correspondence Group on e-Navigation, which provided an interim report to COMSAR, in particular on the progress of the initial gap analysis. The Sub-Committee agreed the use of a template based on the model already agreed by NAV 56 and further refined by the Republic of Korea. The template was aimed at identifying practical e-navigation solutions based on operational, technical, regulatory and training aspects. It was successfully tested by a working group on an example of an identified gap relating to lack of presentation of warning broadcasts on navigation displays. The template and the developed example of gap analysis and practical e-navigation solutions are reproduced hereunder.

It was agreed that the template would be used by the Correspondence Group on e-Navigation to develop practical e-Navigation solutions for other identified gaps covering shipboard users, shore-based users and SAR, taking into account the human element.



Taking into account the conclusions of the workshop hosted by Norway at the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) headquarters in Monaco, in November 2010, on a common data structure for e-Navigation, the Sub-Committee unanimously agreed that IHO's S-100 data model should be used as a baseline for creating a framework for data access and information services under the scope of SOLAS. COMSAR also agreed that IMO, in consultation with other organizations, should establish an IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Model (HGDM) on creating a framework for data access and information services under the scope of SOLAS, based on the example of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on ECDIS. The draft Terms of Reference developed by the Sub-Committee included the following tasks:

*“.1 consider matters related to the framework for data access and information services under the scope of SOLAS, using as a baseline IHO's S-100 data model, as requested by IMO or IHO, and prepare appropriate documentation; and*

*.2 review the results of studies by IMO, IHO and other related organizations which address aspects of access and information services under the scope of SOLAS, and advise IMO and IHO as to whether they are compatible with the e-navigation concept and take into account the identified dynamic user needs.”*

The HGDM group should be constituted of representatives of IMO and IHO Member States and Secretariats, specialized agencies and organizations with an official IMO/IHO observer status. It should report to the IMO Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation, and to the IHO through the IHB Directing Committee.

The Sub-Committee also expressed that there was a need for resilience in the overall system of e-Navigation. Navigation and communications equipment should be able to reliably indicate that they were functioning correctly. If redundancy was used to provide resilience, the system should be able to transfer automatically to an alternative source, with appropriate indication being given to the user. In addition, information concerning the authenticity of the data was needed including its source.

**3. Review of the GMDSS**

The MSC had requested COMSAR to address GMDSS modernization via a scoping exercise to be completed during COMSAR 15 and COMSAR 16. At this session, the Sub-Committee received several comments and information, in particular from the Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group, and took note of their opinion:

*.1 that a review of the GMDSS had to lead to a system which was flexible and scalable and, to achieve this, there would be no need for a complete re-design of the system, but an evolution of the current system would be sufficient;*

*.2 that after the review had taken place, there would be a need for a continuous review of the system, in order to keep it up to date with technical developments;*

*.3 that in reviewing the GMDSS, non-SOLAS (non-Convention) ships should be taken fully into account;*

The Sub-Committee noted that more focus, using a goal-based approach, was needed in defining the scope of the project on the review and modernization of the GMDSS. It also decided to establish a Correspondence Group on the Scoping exercise to continue the work further intersessionally between COMSAR 15 and COMSAR 16 with a view of finalization at COMSAR 16.

**4. Recommended actions by IALA**

# It is recommended that:

# 4.1 The Council

* Note the information on e-navigation (item 2)

## 4.2 The VTS Committee

* Note the information on e-navigation, in particular the improved version of the template for developing example of gap analysis and practical e-Navigation solutions (item2)
* Note the proposal for the creation of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Model (HGDM) (item 2)

**4.3 The e-Navigation Committee**

* Note the information on e-navigation, in particular the improved version of the template for developing example of gap analysis and practical e-Navigation solutions (item2)
* Note that COMSAR agreed that IHO's S-100 data model should be used as a baseline for creating a framework for data access and information services under the scope of SOLAS (item 2)
* Note the proposal for the creation of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Model (HGDM) (item 2).

**4.4 The ANM Committee**

* Note the information on e-navigation (item2)

# 5. Date of the next session.

The 16th session had been scheduled to take place from 12 to 16 March 2012 at the IMO headquarters in London.

\* \* \*

J.Ch. Leclair.

Accredited IALA Representative to IMO

13 mars 2011.

# Annex

**Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR)**

**16th session – 12 - 16 March 2011**

**Agenda proposed to the Maritime Safety Committee**

Opening of the session

1 Adoption of the agenda

2 Decisions of other IMO bodies

3 Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)

1. Further development of the GMDSS master plan on shore-based facilities
2. Consideration of operational and technical co-ordination provisions of maritime safety information (MSI) services, including review of the related documents
3. Scoping exercise to establish the need for a review of the elements and procedures of the GMDSS

4 ITU maritime radiocommunication matters

1. Consideration of radiocommunication ITU-R Study Group matters
2. Consideration of ITU World Radiocommunication Conference matters

5 Consideration of developments in Inmarsat and COSPAS-SARSAT

6 Search and Rescue matters

1. Development of guidelines on harmonized aeronautical and maritime search and rescue procedures, including SAR training matters
2. Further development of the Global SAR Plan for the provision of maritime SAR services, including procedures for routeing distress information in the GMDSS

7 Developments in maritime radiocommunication systems and technology

8 Development of amendments to the IAMSAR Manual

9 Development of measures to avoid false distress alerts

10 Development of measures to protect the safety of persons rescued at sea

11 Development of an e-Navigation strategy implementation plan

12 Biennial agenda and provisional agenda for COMSAR 17

13 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2010

14 Any other business

15 Report to the Maritime Safety Committee