



IHB File No. S1/0015

CIRCULAR LETTER 41/2016
23 August 2016

**DATE OF ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE IHO AND ITS SUPPORTING BASIC DOCUMENTS**

Reference:

- A. IHO Circular Letter 01/2016 dated 7 January - *Status Report on Approvals of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO and of Applications from New Member States and accession of new Member States*
- B. IHO Circular Letter 16/2016 dated 29 March - *Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO - 47 of 48 Approvals Achieved*
- C. IHO Circular Letter 28/2016 dated 27 June - *Progress on Approval of the Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO*

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The 3rd Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC-3) held in 2005 agreed a Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO. Subsequently, the 17th International Hydrographic Conference (IHC-17) held in 2007 approved the supporting Basic Documents. Consolidated copies of the Amended Convention and the new Basic Documents are available on the IHO website at www.iho.int/Letters&Documents/Basic Documents.

2. In order for the Amended Convention and the supporting Basic Documents to enter into force, the approvals of at least 48 existing Member States, being two-thirds of the Member States entitled to vote at the time of the EIHC-3, are required. Reference A reported that at the end of 2015, 46 of the required 48 Member State Governments had formally notified their approval of the Protocol of Amendments. References B and C reported on subsequent progress which augured for the imminent ratification of the Protocol.

3. The Directing Committee is very pleased to report that the Government of Monaco has informed the Directing Committee that it was formally notified of the approval of the 48th Member State on 8 August 2016. In accordance with the terms of the Protocol, this means that the Amended Convention on the IHO and its supporting Basic Documents will enter into force three months later, this being on 8 November 2016.

4. As a result of the entry into force of the revised Convention and its supporting Basic Documents, a number of changes to the organization of the IHO will take effect from 8 November. The most significant of these changes include:

- the term *International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB)* used to describe the headquarters and the secretariat of the IHO will cease to be used and will be replaced by the term *IHO Secretariat*;
- the Directing Committee, comprising a President and two Directors will cease to lead the IHB (Secretariat of the IHO). Instead, the Secretariat of the IHO will be led by a Secretary-General assisted by two subordinate Directors;

- the term *International Hydrographic Conference* used to designate the principal organ of the Organization, composed of all Member States, will be replaced by the term *Assembly*. The ordinary sessions of the Assembly will be held every three years instead of every five years for the Conference. The first session of the IHO Assembly (A-1) will be held in Monaco from 24 to 28 April 2017, at which time an IHO Council will be established. In order to provide a logical and sequential timetable for decision making, the Directing Committee anticipates that the first meeting of the Council (C-1) will take place in October 2017 and annually thereafter. The second session of the Assembly (A-2) should take place in April 2020;
- the subsidiary organs will report to the Council that will then refer their proposals to the Assembly or to the Member States, for adoption, through correspondence;
- the planning cycle for the IHO work programme and budget will change from a five-year to a three-year cycle. The next cycle will run from 2018 to 2020.
- for States wishing to join the IHO that are already Member States of the United Nations there will be no requirement to seek the approval of existing Member States of the IHO;
- the strict eligibility requirements for candidates seeking election as the Secretary-General or a Director are relaxed; and
- in future, where voting by correspondence is required, through the Council, decisions will be taken based on a majority of the Member States that cast a vote, rather than the existing arrangements where a majority of all the Member States entitled to vote is required. A minimum number of at least one-third of all Member States eligible to vote must vote positively for the vote to stand.

5. In addition, a significant number of editorial amendments will be required to IHO Resolutions to reflect the above and other changes. Unless more urgent revision is required, the Directing Committee intends to present the required consequential changes to the Resolutions to the first session of the Assembly for consideration in April 2017.

6. The detailed impact of the new regime on the timeline for the preparation of the first session of the Assembly will be described in a forthcoming Assembly Circular Letter.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,



Robert WARD
President