



THIS CIRCULAR LETTER REQUIRES YOU TO VOTE

IHB File No. S3/7020

CIRCULAR LETTER 24/2012
20 February 2012

REPORT OF S-23 WORKING GROUP

Reference: a) CL 22/2009/Rev dated 08 April
b) CL 55/2011 dated 31 August

Dear Hydrographer,

1 Member States are hereby informed that the Report of the S-23 WG, established in accordance with reference a), has been passed to the Bureau and posted on the IHO web site under http://www.iho-ohi.net/mtg_docs/com_wg/S-23WG/S-23WG_Misc/Final_S-23_WG_Report_to_MS.pdf. The Bureau is ready to provide hard copies of the report if requested. The S-23 WG in accordance with its Terms of Reference (ToR) was tasked to "Produce a revised edition of Special Publication S-23, Limits of Oceans and Seas, and submit a report of its work together with a draft 4th edition of the publication to the IHB no later than June 2011, for the subsequent approval of Member States". At reference b) Member States were informed that the work of the S-23 WG was not completed and that the report would be provided by February 2012.

2 The report provides an account of the work of the S-23 WG. Member States in considering the report are advised to visit the IHO web pages indicated in the various parts of the report in order to have a clear picture of the different views, positions and comments expressed by the members of the S-23 WG on the various topics that were considered and the S-23 Letters that were prepared by the S-23 WG Chair-Group (Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary) in order to progress its work. This will assist Member States to better understand the details of the work of the S-23 WG.

3 As can be seen from the report, although some progress was achieved, the S-23 WG failed to present a new edition of the publication for the approval of Member States, as was anticipated in its ToR. The naming of the sea area between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago was the main reason of failure of the WG to come up with a new edition of the publication, as the interested States in this area were unable to reach a compromise, despite the efforts made and the additional time devoted to this purpose. It should also be noted that the work of the S-23 WG was undoubtedly affected by political and diplomatic lobbying by some members of the Working Group.

4 Member States are requested to fill in the attached voting form and return it to the Bureau **no later than Friday 23 March**. Comments and views expressed by Member States will be considered by the Directing Committee when preparing its report to the Conference. The Directing Committee urges Member States to agree, during the Conference, on a final position on the way that this publication should be handled, taking due account of the problems that the organization, the Bureau and Member States have encountered over the last twenty years.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Annex: Voting form

VOTING FORM
(to be returned to the IHB by 23 March 2012
E-mail: info@iho.int - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)

FINAL REPORT OF S-23 WG TO MEMBER STATES

Member State:

Contact: **E-mail:**

Malacca and Singapore Straits

1. Do you agree that the Malacca and Singapore Straits, for which there was consensus of the Members of the S-23 Working Group, should be considered a single, continuous waterway, forming a separate administrative division in S-23?

YES NO

Chinese proposals

2. a) Do you agree that the proposals from China, presented in part A of Annex B of the S-23 WG report to Member States http://www.iho-ohi.net/mtg_docs/com_wg/S-23WG/S-23WG_Misc/Final_S-23_WG_Report_to_MS.pdf), for which there was a consensus of the S-23 Working Group, should be adopted for inclusion in S-23?

YES NO

- b) Please provide comments on the issues of Beibu Gulf / Gulf of Tonkin and Taiwan/Taiwan Dao presented in part B of Annex B of the S-23 WG report to Member States http://www.iho-ohi.net/mtg_docs/com_wg/S-23WG/S-23WG_Misc/Final_S-23_WG_Report_to_MS.pdf) for which there was no consensus of the members of the S-23 Working Group.

Important Notice

3. Do you agree that the “Important Notice”, presented in Annex A of the S-23 Working Group report to Member States (http://www.iho-ohi.net/mtg_docs/com_wg/S-23WG/S-23WG_Misc/Final_S-23_WG_Report_to_MS.pdf) should be adopted for inclusion in S-23?

YES

NO

Sea area between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago

4. As there has been no consensus between the members of the S-23 WG on the issue of naming the sea area between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago, what are your views on possible ways forward for progressing a new edition of S-23?

Additional comments (if required)