

**12<sup>th</sup> CHRIS MEETING**  
**Valparaiso, Chile, 23-25 October 2000**

**IHO/Industry Interface Meeting, Monaco, 18 March 2000**  
*(Neil Guy, IHB)*

The advent of digital charting and publications has altered the traditional role of the National Hydrographic Offices of the IHO Member States. For the first time commercial organisations have been able to participate in the production and distribution of these digital products. It has generally been accepted that while there are good relationships between National Hydrographic Offices and the Industry related to hydrography and charting, these relationships could be improved and expanded. Opportunities were being missed whereby maritime safety services could be developed by greater co-operation between the Hydrographic Offices and Industry. The various responsibilities and roles of the IHO Member States and Industry needed clarification. Many issues, such as development of standards, and data production and distribution had to be considered in the light of the contributions that could be made by all the role-players.

An IHO/Industry Interface Meeting was held during the weekend immediately prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference, which commenced, on 20 March 2000. It was felt that as delegations from Hydrographic Offices were attending the Conference and as there was also an Exhibition by Industry the opportunity should be taken to hold a meeting to address these issues.

During the morning session, four invited speakers presented papers on various topical aspects of this relationship under the Chairmanship of RAdm Neil GUY. The programme was as follows;

Government and Industry in Administration – Ing. Général Gilles **BESSERO**.

Ing. gén. BESSERO is well known in hydrographic circles as a result of his long service at SHOM. He is now in the procurement section of the French Ministry of Defence.

Government and Industry in Law – Mr Richard **SHAW**.

Mr SHAW is an imminent maritime lawyer with much experience of maritime casualties, safety issues and the legal requirements of IMO related matters.

Government and Industry in Development and Technical Partnerships – Mr. George **SPOELSTRA**.

Mr. George SPOELSTRA is a member of the Netherlands Hydrographic Office and has studied the relationships of Government and Industry in post-graduate research.

Government and Industry in the Future – Mr. John **SPITTAL**.

Mr. John SPITTAL is the Hydrographer of New Zealand who has extensive experience of Government/ Industry relationships as a result of the recent reorganisation of the hydrographic services in New Zealand.

The papers presented were very pertinent and many interesting questions were put to the speakers. Much debate ensued. Some of the points made were as follows:

There are three options for Government/ Industry relations: Government could be the custodian of Industry, it could be the customer of Industry or a partner with Industry.

Is privatisation the universal solution? The privatisation of services that were subject to responsibility and liability had to be carefully done. A contract between Government and Industry would require that the parent partner accepted some responsibility for the subsidiary. Duty of care is a major aspect of liability and the way ahead will lie in the use of common sense to problems, such as a 'think first, then act and then record what has transpired' type of approach.

The positioning of partnerships to meet the technological need is very important. These partnerships could have many and various advantages but there are also pitfalls and risks. Great care should be exercised in establishing these relationships and they should be based on sound and clear principles.

In the changing times do hydrographers really know what types of services are needed and can they continue to operate in isolation? Are they prepared to break out of their traditional mould or will they eventually make themselves irrelevant?

Some recommendations were also made:

- It is necessary to identify the potential risks in Government/Industry partnerships and, where possible to solve them or mitigate them beforehand.
- The contracts need to be clearly drawn and where possible should remain unaltered.
- The IHO, through the medium of strategic planning, will have to address e-commerce.
- Hydrographers should be aware that they were role-players in areas beyond the traditional provision of maritime safety information. The data held by them could be of service in other fields to their Governments, academia and Industry.
- There should never be a conflict of interest between Government and Industry in the quality of the maritime safety services that are jointly or individually provided.

In the afternoon, a Panel Discussion was conducted under the Chairmanship of Dr Peter **EHLERS**.

The Panel consisted of members from both Government and Industry as follows:

- Mr Doug **BROWN** (US **National** Ocean and Atmospheric Administration)
- Mr Gert **BUTTGENBACH** (7Cs, Germany)
- Captain Wilson **CHUA** (Maritime Port Authority, Singapore)
- Mr Rolando **FEITO SARDUY** (Cuban Hydrographic Office)
- Mr Vic **JENKINS** (UK Hydrographic Office)
- Dr Yashimo **KUBO** (Japanese Hydrographic Department)
- Dr Fukuzui **MORI** (SOGO Nippon Systems Japan)
- Mr Tony **O'CONNOR** (Canadian Hydrographic Service)
- Mr Tom **SPURLING** (LADS, Australia)
- Mr Tor **SVANES** (C-Map, Norway)
- Mr Andrey **VOROBIEV** (Transas Marine, Russia)

Opening statements were made by the panellists and can be summarised as follows.

**O'CONNOR:** The private sector is not to be feared. Canada has enjoyed an healthy and successful partnership with Industry for a long time. While there is a lack of funding that can be generated in the provision of the services, the biggest investor for the near future would be the government.

**FEITO SARDUY :** Cuba has produced both raster and ENC data in co-operation with Industry.

**JENKINS:** The best solution would be for government and Industry to concentrate on the areas that they can do best. Was there adequate communication between the role-players? There should be a united voice from Industry as at present conflicting opinions were reaching government agencies.

**CHUA:** Singapore has great need for the latest technology in the operation of its ports. It looks to Industry as well to contribute in all the technological areas necessary for a successful operation.

**KUBO:** The Japanese has close relationship with private companies in all aspects of hydrography and it uses this relationship successfully in the establishment of hardware and software infrastructures and operational processes

**BROWN:** The US NOAA also has successful relationships with Industry and feels that Information Technology is levelling the playing fields in the provision of hydrographic services. There is a challenge to increase the role of Industry responsibly. An important aspect is training and NOAA is prepared to do whatever is necessary to establish the core capability.

**BUTTGENBACH:** The meeting is an historic occasion and long overdue. The Open ECDIS Forum is an example of IHO/Industry successful co-operation. This needs to be expanded into the areas of distribution and marketing of ENCs. Industry should also be able to become IHO Members in some form. Better communications were needed and the expertise and experience of Industry needs to be recognised and utilised especially in the development of standards.

**SVANES:** A clearer definition of roles of Government and Industry were needed. Why was it necessary for HOs to set up commercial operations when they already existed?

**VOROBIEV:** The differences between ECDIS and ECS and the lack of a standard for the latter are seen as an area that the IHO should address. Encryption and possibly different requirements by different RENCs is also an area of potential concern. An Industry forum is necessary but a unity of approach will have to be reached by Industry in many aspects.

**SPURLING:** LADS has had a long and successful relationship with governments in the field of data collection. Industry has great potential but the HOs need to retain the core competence.

**MORI:** Has been involved with government in all aspects of hardware, software and maintenance (ENC updating) operations.

Although there was a statutory requirement for HOs to conduct certain functions these could be successfully delegated to others including Industry partners provided that the necessary control was exercised and responsibilities clearly defined.

The IHO is, and should continue, restructuring itself for the challenge of new technology.

It was becoming obvious that an Industry association was necessary to represent the interests of the industries involved in these activities and to speak, where possible, with one voice.

While Industry was capable of adapting to changes more quickly, it had to abide by the accepted standards. Greater use should be made of the OEF in improving communications between Government and Industry and as a forum for interaction between them. The standards should be well-prepared and as consistent and constant as possible.

It was generally considered that the Meeting was a great success and that the IHO Member States and Industry should take every opportunity to build on the positive aspects of the Meeting and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the interests of the mariner are always best served.