



"Science to Services for a Resilient Pacific"

Fifth Meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-5) Working Papers

7-9 August 2019

Apia

Samoa

Agenda Item 15.3: International obligations of Marine Meteorological Services in the Pacific

Purpose:

1. To provide information on the international obligations related to the delivery of Marine Meteorological Services by the Pacific National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs).
2. To advise on the need for improved national coordination and technical assistance programmes ensuring NMHSs deliver compliant Marine Meteorological Services and contribute to improved safety of navigation.

Background:

1. In order to support sustainable economic development and protect the ocean and the marine environment of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), it is necessary that navigation and all activities within the waters under PICTs jurisdiction are carried out safely.
2. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Chapter V applies to all ships and requires Contracting Governments to ensure safety of navigation by providing services such as navigational and meteorological warnings, search and rescue (SAR), hydrography, ship reporting and routing systems and vessel traffic services (VTS), and aids to navigation (AtoN). The obligations placed on Contracting Governments under SOLAS Chapter V, both as Flag States and as Coastal States, are included in the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code). This code constitutes the legal framework for the implementation of the mandatory IMO Member State Audit scheme (IMSAS) which has become mandatory on 1 January 2016.
3. In the Nuku'alofa Communiqué of 2017, Transport Ministers reaffirmed the paramount importance of a safe environment and safety culture in international and domestic shipping through coordination and collaboration on relevant initiatives and endorsed the Regional Strategy on Safety of Navigation in the Pacific (the Strategy). The aim of this Strategy is to provide a regional framework to address, in a consistent manner, five main areas of safety of navigation through a global and coordinated approach, namely: i) Governance; ii) Navigation and meteorological services and warnings; iii) Hydrographic services; iv) AtoN services and Vessel Traffic Services (VTS); and v) Search and Rescue (SAR) services.



4. The Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) 2017-2026 sets out the strategic context and direction for strengthening the Pacific NMHSs. Under the Key Outcome 2 *Improved marine weather services*, several national and regional priority actions have been adopted including the establishment of Quality Management Systems (QMS) for marine weather services and SOLAS obligations.

Update:

1. The mandatory International Maritime Organization (IMO) Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) is the recognition that the development of internationally agreed regulations is of little value unless they are effectively and consistently implemented. The IMSAS developed first on a voluntary basis before mandatory from 1 January 2016 seeking to determine the extent to which IMO Member States give full and complete effect to their obligations and responsibilities contained in a number of IMO treaty instruments. All Pacific islands states, members of IMO, have been audited¹ except Palau in November 2019 and Marshall Islands in September 2020.
2. Under IMSAS, the objective is to verify, through the implementation of the III Code, that a Contracting Government or Party gives full and complete effect to the provisions of the applicable IMO conventions to which it is a Contracting Government or Party. The 2015 non-exhaustive list of obligations relevant to the Code are contained in the Resolution A.1105(29) and includes Regulation V/5 of the SOLAS Convention: *Meteorological services and warnings*, which requires:
 - a. Provision and promulgation of meteorological information and warnings to shipping;
 - b. Provisions for recording and reporting observations from ships; and
 - c. Transmission of ship reports.
 To enforce these obligations, the Code prescribes to develop and implement a control and monitoring programme and periodical evaluation of the performance in respect of exercising rights and meeting obligations.
3. These responsibilities are those of the Marine Meteorological Services (MMS) as specified in the *Manual on Marine Meteorological Services* (WMO-No. 558) supported by the *Guide to Marine Meteorological Services* (WMO-No. 471) of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The Manual is designed to: (a) specify obligations of Members in the implementation of MMS; (b) To facilitate cooperation in respect of the international coordination of MMS, in particular the delivery of the IMO/WMO Worldwide Met Ocean Information and Warning Service (WWMIWS); (c) facilitate cooperation between the World Weather Watch (WWW) and MMS; and (d) ensure adequate uniformity and standardization in the practices and procedures followed to achieve (a), (b) and (c) above.
4. In addition, the Joint WMO/International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)/IMO *Manual on Maritime Safety Information (MSI)* is the practical guide for anyone who is concerned with drafting navigational warnings (SOLAS Reg. V/4) or with the issuance of meteorological forecasts and warnings (SOLAS Reg. V/5) under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).
5. The drafting and broadcast of MSI that includes navigational and meteorological warnings is the shared responsibility of various national agencies and requires proper coordination to ensure those services meet the country's international obligations, standards and best practises. It is advisable for NMHSs to be member of existing national maritime committees

¹ The IMSAS 2016 – 2020 schedule for the Pacific is the following: Papua New Guinea, September 2016; Kiribati, March 2017; Vanuatu, October 2017; Fiji, April 2018; Samoa, May 2018; Cook Islands, May 2018; Tuvalu, March 2019; Tonga, June 2019; Solomon Islands, July 2019;



or equivalent and contribute to decision-making related to safety of navigation and more specifically MSI.

6. While the framework for the delivery of MMS is well defined by WMO and responds to SOLAS Contracting Governments' obligations, it is not confirmed whether the services delivered by the Pacific NMHSs fulfil those requirements. Actions related to QMS and SOLAS obligations under Key Outcome 2 of the PIMS would require a comprehensive and detailed evaluation of the existing services in the Pacific NMHSs and specific assistance programmes to assist with the development of capacity and implementation of QMS for the effective delivery of MMS.
7. While the delivery of MMS in accordance with international standards participates in fulfilling PICTs' international obligations, it primarily contributes to ensure safety of all ocean users within PICTs large sea areas. The development of capacity as MMS and implementation of QMS is paramount to provide and promulgate meteorological information and warnings that are understood and used by the local maritime and fishing industry and communities.

Recommendations:

The Meeting is invited to:

- ☐ **Recognise** the need to ensure NMHSs fulfil their international obligations as Marine Meteorological Services and provide the best meteorological information to local ocean users.
- ☐ **Request** to have NMHSs members of existing maritime committees with other relevant national agencies for improved national coordination in the delivery of safety of navigation services and the broadcast of maritime safety information.
- ☐ **Agree** to share information from key IMSAS findings related to the delivery of Marine Meteorological Services with the PIMOS panel to support regional coordination of donors' assistance to NMHSs.
- ☐ **Request** development partners to coordinate with the PIMOS Panel a regional approach to implement Quality management Systems and stakeholder engagement fora for the enhanced delivery of Marine Meteorological Services in accordance with international conventions, codes and guidelines and for the safety of all ocean users.

Attachment

Links

- www.imo.org
- <https://public.wmo.int/en>
- <https://www.jcomm.info/>
- Manual on Maritime Safety Information
<http://www.imo.org/en/Publications/Documents/Newsletters%20and%20Mailers/Mailers/I B910E.pdf>
- Manual of Marine Meteorological Services
https://library.wmo.int/doc_num.php?explnum_id=5442

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