

IALA COUNCIL 73rd session



8, 9 and 10 June 2021
Video conference

6.1 - REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. GENERAL

This document provides a general update on several matters related to the governance and operation of IALA. Some matters will be dealt with in greater detail under other agenda items.

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions IALA and the World-Wide Academy are on track with their respective work programmes and planned activities.

Each of the four Committees have met remotely once again, during March and April, in accordance with established procedures. These innovative working arrangements proved remarkably effective for the meetings in the latter part of last year and this year. In total, 575 attendees logged on during this spring session and they had approximately 250 meetings.

This success is a great tribute to the flexibility of the committee leadership and participants, who all made tremendous efforts and worked in the well-known spirit of IALA.

Face-to-face meetings remain IALA's preferred mode of operation, and the Secretariat is planning for the committee and panel meetings to take place with a physical element at the IALA Headquarters. The meetings will most probably be in a new hybrid version with a combination of virtual and physical meetings and for that purpose the Headquarters has been updated with new Wi-Fi and equipment for a more hybrid and virtual post pandemic method of working.

However, everything – especially long-term planning - is of course uncertain for the moment, and the health situation will be followed carefully. In the present situation all meetings for the rest of 2021 will be virtual and the Council has already decided to postpone the General Assembly and the Conference in Rio one year to 2023.

The 14th Symposium was successfully hosted by the Netherlands in Rotterdam from 12 – 16 April as the first virtual Symposium in the history of IALA. The presentations were of very high quality and the conclusions will support the guidance of the committees work in the future.

The membership of IALA is growing even after termination by Council of several members for non-payment and the interest in the committee work is very satisfying.

The Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation is open for signatures at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs in Paris until end of January 2022. So far (9 May) seven States have signed, and one State has ratified the Convention.



2. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of IALA consists of 312 members (89 National, 151 Industrial and 72 Associate), which is eleven members more than at the same time last year, and after the termination or resignation of a few members which took effect from 1st January 2021. The movements in membership in the different categories since C72 are the following:

Applications

- One application was received for National membership and provisionally accepted. It is now awaiting the Council confirmation.
- Five applications were received for Industrial membership; three were provisionally accepted and are to be confirmed by the Council; two are awaiting approval by the Council.

Resignation

- One resignation was received from Industrial membership.

Reinstate

- Nigeria has settled its outstanding debts early in February and is no longer suspended. This organization is now awaiting the confirmation of its reinstatement by the Council.

Members in arrear

Two National members remain suspended for non-payment of their contributions (Algeria and Rep of Congo). To help them solve their debts, the previous years were waived for Algeria and Rep of Congo and only the 2019 remained due in addition to the 2020 contribution. In November 2020, a letter was received from Algeria explaining that this was due to a very long administrative process to pay nongovernmental contributions, but that all the steps were taken to solve this matter. They also expressed their will to remain a member. Therefore, with the recommendations of the auditors, these members have not been issued their calls for contributions for the year 2021 to prevent the increase of their debts.

In addition to that, the number of members in arrears has considerably come down due to a successful collection of debt by the Secretariat after restructuring of the Administrative staff, where Ms. Lorraine Mbong is now the dedicated Membership officer.

Membership for the following organizations was kept on hold provided that the payment of their debts is received before Council 73: Port Autonome de Douala, who has settled its overdue. La Maquinista Valenciana in Spain has, despite several reminders not to settle their debt. La Maquinista should therefore be removed from IALA Membership.

The following organizations are now in the position to be removed from IALA membership for non-payment of their contributions: Pishgam Sanat Tahmin Engineering in Iran; Nawae Construction Ltd. and Caveman Construction in Papua New Guinea.

The COVID19 has significantly affected the global economy. A few members have raised their difficulties to settle the contributions this year or in time. IALA is paying a careful attention to each request and proposals are made on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the status of the contributions of the member over the past years.

More details on membership are in the agenda items 9 and 14.



3. DIGITAL DEVELOPMENTS – WORKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COMMITTEES AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Following the successful implementation of the virtual committees in 2020, the Secretariat have focused upon refining the online facilities offered to the membership. A key phase of this process was obtaining feedback from those who participated in the virtual committees. Following this consultation amendments were made to the working arrangements, in particular streamlining the silent approval procedure and emphasising the importance of accommodating the many time zones in the many task group meetings that were undertaken.

Of particular note is the desire to build upon the committee's dashboard hosted on the IALA website. As such, the look and feel of the dashboards have been developed making them far more intuitive and aesthetically pleasing. The main functional advancement has been the inclusion of a calendar where members can find the meetings associated with the committee.

To improve the quality of the documents the Secretariat have also produced the IALA Style Guide. This document is designed to assist those preparing and reviewing documentation. This reflects the Secretariat's desire to have a common language, structure and appearance of documents and this guide is designed to assist authors and reviewers achieve the production of consistent and professional documents.

The committees in March and April were again successful. These successes could not have been achieved without the assistance of the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and participants as a whole to engage so wholeheartedly in the work. This has resulted in three recommendations and ten guidelines with five liaison notes proposed to be sent to the sister organizations that demonstrates IALA integration with other bodies.

4. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

With the latest reorganization the IALA and WWA staff now consist of 12 full time employed members and four consultants (three in the WWA section and one for Communication). Ms. Virginia Marshall will retire in 2021.

The Secretariat has mainly been working from home since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The HQ in Saint-Germain-en-Laye is regularly visited in order to ensure the smooth running of the Association and to make sure that all technical facilities are up to date during the major meetings.

During this period the Secretariat has actively demonstrated, that despite the current pandemic, the service towards the members and the general running of the association have continued effectively and with the customary high level of quality.

However, it has been a challenge not to be able to meet face to face when coordinating complicated tasks, easy access to support and advice from colleagues and for welfare and social activities. In the long run this will negatively affect the special IALA "family" recipe and efficiency of the Secretariat.

Post pandemic it is expected to return to physical work at the headquarters, but with the possibility of working from home and having virtual meetings when appropriate.

Often it is preferable to travel for certain meetings and work and whilst we have shown it is possible to meet virtually, virtual meetings are not the preferred scenario for relations to members, many of the WWA missions and other meetings etc. where it is considered essential to meet physical when situation again permits.



5. THE CHANGE OF STATUS PROJECT

The signing ceremony of the Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation was held on 27 January 2021 in Paris and as depositary State of the Convention, France, represented by Mrs. Annick Girardin, Minister for Marine Affairs, was the first State to sign the Convention.

This ceremony marked the opening for signature of the Convention for a period of one year. All Member States of the United Nations, and in particular the other signatories of the Final Act of the Kuala Lumpur Conference, are invited to sign the Convention at the Protocol of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

States that have signed the Convention are then invited to transmit the instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval to France, the depositary State. Once the period for signature is closed on 26 January 2022, all Member States of the United Nations that have not signed, may accede to the Convention, which will enter into force "on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the thirtieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession".

The certified versions of the Convention in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish can be found on the IALA web site <https://www.iala-aism.org/the-igo-project/>

The General Regulations are prepared in a draft based on the adopted Convention and will be approved at the first General Assembly of the Organization. The draft General regulation and its Financial Regulations were made available as an information paper at the Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

A draft HQ Agreement is prepared by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. This will be discussed in the Legal Advisory Panel and finalized in due time before the entry into force of the Convention.

6. PREPARATION FOR THE 20TH CONFERENCE

Unfortunately, the 20th Conference in Rio de Janeiro had to be postponed to May 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and with the uncertainty of the future situation. (See Intersessional Decision of the Council of April 2021).

The preparations for the Conference at the Windsor Convention Centre is progressing well and decision on the theme and topics has been taken. Call for abstracts has been issued, but postponed one year.

The first meetings of the Steering Group for the preparation of the Conference have been held and the Industrial Members Committee has held a meeting in Rio de Janeiro and inspected all the possible facilities to ensure a successful Exhibition and Industrial Members evening.

The Council members from Brazil and the IMC will give more details during the relevant agenda point.

Following the Conference and General Assembly in 2023, it is foreseen that the regular interval of two years between the Conference and Symposium will be re-established. Therefore, Singapore will host the Symposium in 2025 with India hosting the Conference and General Assembly in 2027.

7. THE PANDEMIC IMPACT ON IALA EVENTS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2021

IALA has successfully made the transition to the hosting of virtual meetings, particularly the technical committees, PAP, LAP and Council. Whilst the return to the provision of face-to-face meetings will remain the main objective, it is recognized that the current evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic will make a return to this method of working challenging, especially in the short term (the remainder of 2021).



Considering the restrictions that will likely remain in place with respect to world-wide travel and the gathering of people indoors, the remaining IALA events scheduled for 2021 will be conducted virtually or postponed or cancelled, as appropriate.

For the remainder of 2021, the technical committees, PAP, LAP and Council will meet virtually following similar protocols as for the recently conducted meetings. The Secretariat has continued to develop the online functionality supporting the technical committees and positive feedback has already been received from the those participating in the spring meetings.

With respect to the planned workshops for which postponement or cancellation decisions have not yet been made, the workshop on Marine Aids to Navigation in the Autonomous World will take place virtually in May 2021. The workshop on Cyber Security, due to take place in Quebec, Canada, between the 1 and 5 November 2021 will be hosted virtually.

8. DEVELOPMENTS OF THE WORLD-WIDE ACADEMY

The World-Wide Academy continues to develop under the leadership of the Dean Omar Frits Eriksson and the Academy Board, chaired by Professor Gug. The Academy has adapted to the Pandemic situation and is for the time being conducting all its activities online, pursuing its goals through its “Enlighten, Educate and Engage” strategy. While there has been significant activity in all three areas, the Academy has also seized the opportunity to develop and consolidate its distance learning resources and methods. As a result, the Academy is now able to deliver most of its training activities as distance learning.

The many Accredited Training Organisations (ATO's) around the world have been forced to cancel their planned AtoN manager courses due to the Pandemic, but at a recent Seminar arranged by the Academy, it was clear that all active ATO's plan to deliver the AtoN Manager courses in 2021, most probably in the second half of the year.

The Academy would not exist were it not for generous sponsorship both in direct and indirect funding from several nations and organizations and the superb and unstinting support from the four IALA Committees. In 2020 the primary sponsors of the Academy have stood by the Academy, and we thank them all for that. The never-ending work on seeking further funding for the Academy continues and members are urged to keep an eye on all sponsoring opportunities in their country or region.

The Dean will brief in more detail under the relevant agenda item.

9. THE COUNCIL IS INVITED TO

Note the information provided in the report.