



International Mobile Satellite Organization

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Twentieth Session

11 – 13 December 2007

Agenda item 5

IMSO/AC/20/5.1

Origin: Director

Date: 28 November 2007

GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS)

GMDSS SERVICES AND PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Executive Summary:	this document provides information on various issues affecting the provision of GMDSS
Action to be taken:	to note the information provided
Related documents:	none

1 GMDSS SERVICES PROVIDED BY INMARSAT

1.1 At its Nineteenth Session, the Committee noted information on various issues affecting the provision of GMDSS services via Inmarsat, in particular on potential failures of particular services at land earth stations, which the Director would follow up. Specifically, the Advisory Committee was informed that *“an event had occurred which highlighted the necessity for Administrations to ensure they have back-up arrangements in place to route distress and safety traffic if the Land Earth Station which normally carries their traffic should fail. Inmarsat has been advised to remind Administrations, and SAR and MSI Authorities in particular, of the vital need for such back-up arrangements.”*

1.2 Since then, the Directorate has worked with IHO, WMO and Inmarsat, and called in one major Land Earth Station Operator (LESO) in relation to this specific incident. A full resolution will involve the Governmental agencies concerned in identifying and contracting for an alternative means of transmission of safety-related broadcast messages.

This is complex and may take some time to resolve. Also, some consequential technical changes are required at the Land Earth Station and these are not yet complete. A full resolution is expected early in 2008. A full operational service has been restored in the meantime.

1.3 As a more general response, the Deputy Director has been working with the IHO Commission on Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings, which includes in its membership representatives from IMO, IHO, WMO and all NAVAREA Co-ordinators, to develop and promulgate specific detailed guidance to all Maritime Safety Information Providers as to the contingency arrangements they should put in place to avoid any such difficulty arising in future.

1.4 The Director and Deputy Director attended programmed Contingency Exercises for the POR (July 2007) and AOR-E (October 2007) Regions. The exercises involved the participation of the relevant Land Earth Station Operators (LESOs). On both occasions, the maritime distress and safety services were successfully restored within the one-hour timescale required by IMSO and IMO. Such exercises are carried out on an approximately quarterly basis, as required by IMSO. These exercises provide IMSO with continuing assurance that operations staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and are ready to exercise their delegated authority to act within the timescales required. Each exercise is conducted according to a script, which is unique for each ocean region, and ensures that all necessary actions are taken in the correct order and at the correct time. The scripts are reviewed and revised after each exercise, to incorporate any lessons learnt.

2 USE OF C-BAND BY GMDSS SERVICES

2.1 The Director reported to the previous session on spectrum issues which would be considered at the ITU World Radio Conference 2007 (WRC-07), and Inmarsat provided information about potential C Band interference affecting GMDSS services. The Director has had contacts with industry representatives and IMO Secretariat and attended the ITU WRC-07.

2.2 The Director is pleased to report that radio regulations governing the use of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits were revised and updated by WRC-07 and a globally harmonized spectrum was identified for

use by International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) which is not expected to affect the use of C Band by mobile satellite transmissions, and therefore not expected to affect the provision of GMDSS services by Inmarsat. The outcome of WRC-07 is reported in document AC/20/4, paragraph 1.5.

3 **INMARSAT-A SERVICES**

The programme to close Inmarsat-A is proceeding satisfactorily, and the service will close at 23:59 on 31 December 2007, in accordance with the information provided to, and agreement of IMO.

4 **PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

As provided for in the Public Services Agreement, the Director attended a meeting of the Public Services Committee on 6 September 2007.
