IALA is on its way to Intergovernmental status

It was reported from Saint-Germain-en-Laye (78100, France) 20 March that the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), which has National members in 82 coastal States around the world, will call a Diplomatic Conference in early 2020 to adopt a new legal framework on its transition from an international non-governmental association to an Intergovernmental Organization (IGO). The Government of Malaysia will host the Conference.

The Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation will have the status of an international treaty instrument. Upon its adoption, it will be deposited with the United Nations (UN) by the Organization’s host nation, the French Republic, and open to signature by all UN members. It will enter into force upon fulfilment of the ratification requirements as agreed by the Diplomatic Conference.

Thanks to the positive engagement of close to 200 National members and government delegates – representing IALA’s global reach in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and North and South America – most of the outstanding drafting work on the Convention text has been successfully completed. Addressing the closing session of the Third Preparatory Diplomatic Conference, hosted by the Directorate-General for Coastal Safety of the Republic of Turkey in Istanbul from 12 to 14 March, IALA Secretary-General Francis Zachariae said that the draft Convention was now “near-perfect”.

From the total of 21 draft Articles 17 were completed and agreed. The remaining four concern matters of a political nature and will require further discussion and final decision-making by the Diplomatic Conference. They concern the entry into force requirements, amendment procedures, membership matters, and the choice of official languages to be used by the IGO.

Most of the drafting work on the transitional arrangements was also completed, leaving only some aspects to be finalized by the Diplomatic Conference. The transitional arrangements are of critical importance to ensuring the continued efficiency of IALA’s technical work. They are also designed to safeguard the membership of the current IALA in the initial period of the new IGO.

Praising ‘the mutual understanding’ and ‘atmosphere of confidence’, the conference chair, HE Serge Ségura, French Ambassador for the Oceans, concluded that the draft Convention text was ‘ready to reach the diplomatic conference.’
While marking a major milestone in the life of IALA, the change of status will not, in any way, change its consultative and technical nature and its principal aim will stay the same: to foster the safe and efficient movement of vessels through improvement and harmonization of marine aids to navigation for the benefit of the maritime community and the protection of the marine environment.

The Istanbul Conference benefited from years of detailed drafting work by the Legal Advisory Panel of the IALA Council followed by two rounds of multilateral discussions held in Paris in 2017 and in Marrakesh in 2018.

Picture caption

*Delegates from around the world attended the highly successful IALA Third Preparatory Diplomatic Conference in Istanbul in March of this year (2019)*