

**RESOLUTION A.381(X)**

*Adopted on 14 November 1977  
Agenda item 8(b)*

**PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
WORLD-WIDE NAVIGATIONAL WARNING SYSTEM**

THE ASSEMBLY,

NOTING Article 16(i) of the Convention on the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization concerning the functions of the Assembly,

BEARING IN MIND the decisions of the XIth International Hydrographic Conference,

HAVING CONSIDERED the Report of the Maritime Safety Committee on its thirty-sixth session,

RESOLVES:

- (a) to adopt the Plan for the Establishment of a World-Wide Navigational Warning System, as set out in the Annex to this Resolution;
- (b) to invite Member Governments to co-operate in the implementation of the Plan.

ANNEX

**PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
WORLD-WIDE NAVIGATIONAL WARNING SYSTEM**

I. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this plan the following definitions apply:

- (a) **Area** A geographical sea area, as shown in Appendix I, established for the purpose of co-ordinating the transmission of radio-navigational warnings. The delimitation of such areas is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundary(ies) between States. Where appropriate, the term NAVAREA followed by an identifying roman numeral may be used as a short title for the Area.
- (b) **Sub-area** A sub-division of an Area in which a number of countries have established a co-ordinated system for the transmission of coastal warnings.
- (c) **Region** The part of an Area or Sub-area in which one country has accepted responsibility for the transmission of coastal warnings.
- (d) **Area Co-ordinator** The authority charged with collating and issuing warnings and bulletins to cover the whole of the Area.

- (e) **National Co-ordinator** The authority charged with collating and issuing coastal warnings from the network of national coast radio stations. He should immediately send all relevant information to the Area Co-ordinator.
- (f) **NAVAREA Warning** Long-range warning broadcasts issued by the Area Co-ordinator for his Area and broadcast by a powerful station or stations to cover the whole of that Area and parts of adjacent Areas.
- (g) **NAVAREA Warning Bulletin** A list of serial numbers of recent NAVAREA Warnings issued and broadcast by the Area Co-ordinator.
- (h) **Coastal Warning** A warning promulgated by a National Co-ordinating Authority through the national coast radio stations to cover a region or a portion of the Area.
- (i) **Local Warning** A warning to cover the Area within the limits of jurisdiction of a harbour or port authority and which may not need promulgation outside these limits. Such warnings may be issued by those authorities.

## II. REQUIREMENTS FOR AREA CO-ORDINATOR

In each Area the Area Co-ordinator should have at his disposal a well-established hydrographic service as well as effective and adequate facilities for transmission to the entire Area, taking into account the appropriate geographical location for propagation purposes. Transmission facilities should, in addition, include as much of the adjacent Areas as can be covered in 24 hours sailing by a fast ship (about 700 miles).

## III. NAVAREA WARNINGS AND BULLETINS

- (a) Warnings transmitted should normally refer only to the Area concerned.
- (b) Warnings should be transmitted at specified times; they should be repeated in the broadcast immediately following the original transmission and thereafter as considered necessary.
- (c) At least two daily transmission times are necessary to provide adequate promulgation of warnings.
- (d) Arrangements may be made for warnings to be available at port offices and, where appropriate, for their eventual inclusion in a generally available printed form.
- (e) NAVAREA Warning Bulletins should be transmitted periodically.
- (f) Warnings should remain valid until cancelled by the Area Co-ordinator.

## IV. COASTAL WARNINGS

- (a) These warnings are restricted to coastal waters. Where there is a requirement for such warnings, it is desirable to cover a distance of up to 100–200 miles from the coast.
- (b) Warnings should be broadcast for as long as the information is valid or until it is made available by other means.
- (c) Warnings should be broadcast at scheduled times, and on receipt when the urgency demands, using if necessary, the alerting systems available for this purpose.

## V. AREA CO-ORDINATOR

- (a) In developing time schedules, the Area Co-ordinator should ensure that the times of broadcasting warnings do not coincide with those in adjacent areas. Due regard should be given to the hours of service fixed for all categories of ship station, and account should be taken of the difference in zone times between the eastern and western boundaries of the Area. (To receive NAVAREA warnings, ship stations may need to adjust hours of service to allow for times of scheduled broadcasts.)
- (b) The compilation, co-ordination and processing of the warnings and bulletins to be broadcast should be left at the discretion of the Area Co-ordinator.
- (c) In the case of navigational warnings which remain in force after the last broadcast, arrangements should be made to ensure that the information they contained is available world-wide.
- (d) The Area Co-ordinator should ensure that those messages that warrant further promulgation in other areas are passed to all Area Co-ordinators.
- (e) Although arrangements made by the Area Co-ordinator should enable all ships to receive by some means messages in force for an Area either before reaching or on entering an Area, nevertheless it should be possible in exceptional cases for ships to obtain on request texts of messages in force, but not included on the current scheduled broadcasts.

## VI. NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Within an Area the National Co-ordinator should, with the least possible delay, communicate all relevant navigational information to the Area Co-ordinator responsible for the Area. In so doing, the originator of the message should, where this is felt necessary, prefix the message by the desired degree of priority.

## VII. SUBJECT MATTER OF WARNINGS

### (a) *NAVAREA Warnings*

Generally speaking, area warnings are concerned with information detailed below which ocean-going mariners require for their safe navigation. This includes, in particular, failures of important aids to navigation, as well as information which may affect changes to planned navigational routes.

The following list of messages considered suitable for transmission as warnings in this system is not exhaustive and should only be regarded as a guideline. Furthermore, it presupposes that sufficiently precise information about the items has not previously been disseminated in Notices to Mariners:

- (i) casualties to lights, fog signals and buoys affecting main shipping lanes;
- (ii) the presence of dangerous wrecks in or near main shipping lanes and, if relevant, their marking;
- (iii) establishment of major new aids to navigation or significant changes to existing ones when such establishment or change might be misleading to shipping;
- (iv) the presence of large unwieldy tows in congested waters;
- (v) drifting mines;
- (vi) areas where search and rescue (SAR) and anti-pollution operations are being carried out (for avoidance of such areas);
- (vii) the presence of newly discovered rocks, shoals, reefs and wrecks likely to constitute a danger to shipping, and, if relevant, their marking;

- (viii) unexpected alteration or suspension of established routes;
- (ix) cable or pipe-laying activities or other underwater operations constituting potential dangers in or near shipping lanes;
- (x) establishment of offshore structures in or near shipping lanes;
- (xi) significant malfunctioning of radio-navigation services;
- (xii) information concerning special operations which might affect the safety of shipping, sometimes over wide areas, e.g. naval exercises, missile firings, space missions, nuclear tests, etc. These should be initially promulgated by the Area Co-ordinator concerned not less than five days in advance of the scheduled event, wherever possible. The messages should be repeated as considered necessary until the event is completed.

The categories of messages to be transmitted as warnings should be reviewed after a period of about 36 months, subsequent to the implementation of the system. Navigational warnings broadcast within the Area should be consecutively numbered throughout the calendar year.

(b) ***Coastal Warnings***

Coastal warnings are concerned with information listed in paragraph VII(a) above which is sufficient for mariners to know when they enter a given Sub-area or region. However, coastal warnings should not be restricted to main shipping lanes.

(c) ***Local Warnings***

Local warnings supplement the coastal system by giving detailed information on aspects which the ocean-going ship normally does not require. However, local warnings may be issued in the national language only.

- (d) ***The area warning system*** should normally be sufficient for the ships which proceed along the main oceanic routes of an Area. However, in some waters knowledge of the coastal warnings may prove necessary.

VIII. USE OF NAVIGATIONAL WARNING SIGNAL (2200 Hz Tone) AND SAFETY SIGNAL (TTT/Sécurité)

(a) ***NAVAREA Warnings***

The Navigational Warning Signal or the Safety Signal should not be used to announce NAVAREA warnings.

(b) ***Coastal Warnings***

- (i) Coastal warnings should be identified for broadcasting purposes by the originator (co-ordinator) as 'vital', 'important', or 'for scheduled broadcast'.
- (ii) 'Vital' navigational warnings should be transmitted on receipt and towards the end of the first available period of silence, preceded by the Navigational Warning Signal and Safety Signal in accordance with the provisions of the Radio Regulations.
- (iii) The Navigational Warning Signal should not be used to announce a scheduled broadcast unless the broadcast contains a 'vital' navigational warning to be transmitted for the first time.
- (iv) 'Important' navigational warnings should be transmitted towards the end of the first available period of silence, preceded by the Safety Signal in accordance with the provisions of the Radio Regulations.

- (v) A scheduled broadcast should not be preceded by the Safety Signal unless the broadcast contains an important navigational warning to be transmitted for the first time, or the repetition of a 'vital' warning.

#### IX. LANGUAGE TO BE USED

All navigational warnings, with the possible exception of those referred to in paragraph VII(c) above, should be transmitted in English (using where possible the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary) and:

- for NAVAREA warnings, in one or more of the official languages of the United Nations, as considered necessary;
- for coastal warnings, in the national language.

#### X. MISCELLANEOUS

##### (a) *Classes of Emission*

For promulgation of NAVAREA warnings, radiotelegraphy (A1) should be used in all cases. In addition, Area Co-ordinators should consider the use of other modes of emission, e.g. direct printing, facsimile, telephony, etc., depending on the needs of the ships in the Area and the facilities available.

##### (b) *Speed of Transmission*

Speed of transmission shall be in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Radio Regulations.

##### (c) *Order of Transmission*

In order to avoid unnecessary copying or waiting, coast stations should, as a general rule, transmit warnings in their scheduled broadcasts in reverse chronological order of receipt.

##### (d) *Intimation of Duration of a Warning*

Where necessary, the duration of a warning, if known, should be given in the text of the warning.

##### (e) *Format*

The elements of information to be included in a NAVAREA warning message, with a few examples, is shown in a recommended format reproduced at Appendix II.

#### XI. IMPORTANT METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

It is recognized to be of great assistance for mariners to receive meteorological warnings relating to safety of navigation together with navigational warnings and on the same frequencies. Area Co-ordinators are encouraged to consider transmission of such meteorological warnings within the general principle laid down for NAVAREA warnings. To avoid misunderstanding, such warnings may be given a special prefix: 'MET Warning'.

#### XII. IMPLEMENTATION

Full implementation of this Plan must await formal IHO and IMCO approval. It is not expected that all Area Co-ordinators will be in a position to implement the scheme at the same time. Nevertheless, it is desirable that those areas able to begin operations in accordance with the Plan should do so on a "provisional basis consistent with meeting obligations imposed by any existing arrangements".



APPENDIX II

FORMAT OF NAVIGATIONAL WARNINGS

COMPULSORY INFORMATION				INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
NAVAREA	Annual Serial No.	General locality	Nature of danger	Exact position	Time observed*	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NAVAREA I	7	France -- West Coast	Quessant light extinguished	48 40 N 04 45 W		
NAVAREA VIII	315	Seychelles	Vessel on fire emitting toxic fumes	..... N ..... E	231036Z	Pass well up wind
NAVAREA IV	13	Gulf of Mexico	Unwieldy tow			Production platform proceeding from Houston to position 28 75 N 90 02 W on 24th

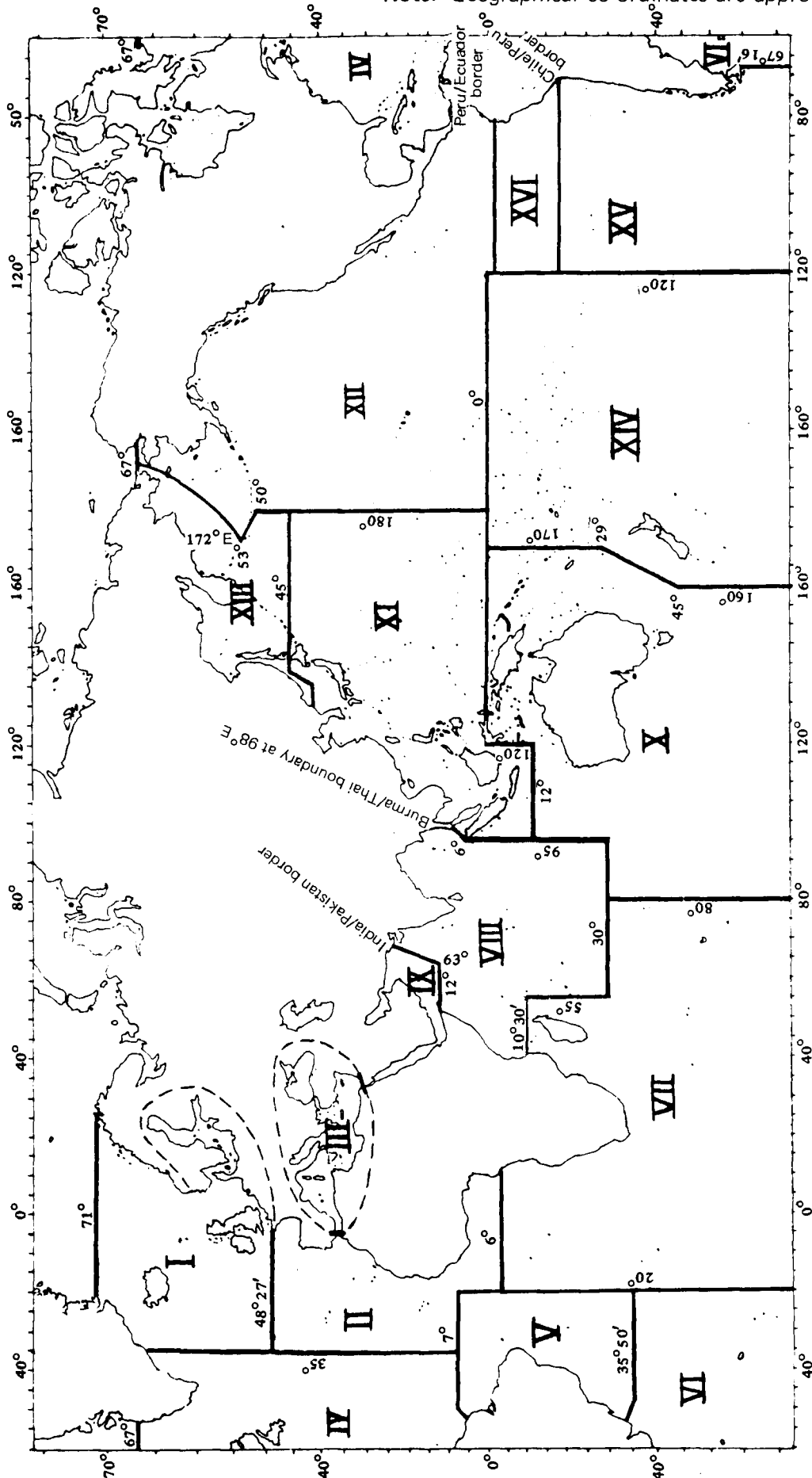
- Note:**
1. Where it is necessary, a more accurate position (i.e. in seconds) may be given in column 5.
  2. Where it is necessary and known, duration of a warning should be given in column 7.
  3. Where possible, columns 4, 5, 6 and 7 should follow the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary.

\* e.g. for drifting objects, such as mines, derelicts, etc.

APPENDIX I

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS FOR CO-ORDINATING AND PROMULGATING RADIO-NAVIGATIONAL WARNINGS

Note: Geographical co-ordinates are approximate





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