FRAMEWORK FOR MARITIME SAR COOPERATION

Maritime Search and Rescue [SAR] comprises the search for, and/or provision of aid to, persons who are, or are feared to be, in need of assistance in the marine environment. SAR operations may take many forms depending upon the type of emergency situation and the availability of staff and equipment.

The humanitarian nature of SAR should inspire all who render assistance to do so freely so as to prevent loss of life, and to alleviate unnecessary suffering.

Effective SAR-operations are normally assured through the establishment of a SAR organization; the provision of a SAR plan; and the maintenance of the means to conduct SAR operations.

The following points constitute the framework for regional SAR cooperation:

1. the Captain of every vessel will provide assistance to any person in distress, or in a situation of potential distress, where this can be done without placing his/her vessel in an unacceptably hazardous situation;

2. Each participant will designate an authority to provide maritime SAR services;

3. voluntary cooperation between neighboring SAR services can contribute to the prevention of emergency situations, and to their speedy and effective resolution;

4. voluntary utilization of the International Maritime Organization [IMO] SAR Manual [1993] would be useful towards the establishment of SAR systems, and in the coordination of SAR operations;

5. all regional SAR services are encouraged to engage in a regular exchange of basic information on SAR points of contact and capabilities;

6. invitations for meetings between regional SAR services would be a useful means of routinely distributing SAR information and developing cooperative procedures and the planning of joint activities such as SAR exercises, educational activities and/or workshops devoted to specific SAR concerns;

7. ongoing dialogue and an exchange of information between SAR services and/or centers in the region and SAR services and/or centers in neighboring regions would be useful in the identification of preventive mechanisms for marine incidents, and the coordination of responses to SAR incidents in these areas;

8. the development and maintenance of a SAR statistical system and data base would be useful for the purposes of SAR planning in the region;
9. The establishment of standard channels of communication would be useful for the coordination of activities and the dissemination of information.

End text on SAR cooperation.