1. Opening of the Meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting by asking the Committee Members and observers to introduce themselves.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

(a) Minutes

The minutes of the Empirical Handicap Sub-Committee Meeting of Sunday 8 November 2009 were noted and approved. The minutes can be downloaded at www.sailing.org/meetings.

(b) No comment was made on Matters Arising.

(c) A suggestion by Paul Ansfield of having a mid-year meeting in 2011 to discuss media strategy was dismissed due to the cost involved.

3. Status Report

(a) NORLYS – Norway

The chairman updated the Committee on empirical handicapping in Norway where the number of boats registered with the NORLYS, the dominating system in Norway inshore and offshore, is more than 1728 (endorsed certificates) and growing. He also noted that the biggest race held under this system has got a fleet of around 500 boats most of them one design and runs over 80 nautical miles.

(b) LYS – Sweden

No report was given.

(c) USPHRF & North American Portsmouth

Paul Ansfield explained that there are currently 14,000 boats in the USA with a certificate of some sort with some boats not affiliated to the system using the USPHRF database. There are approximately 15,500 boats racing within USPHRF affiliated fleets.
and at least 7,500 more racing in clubs and associations not affiliated with USPHRF fleets. There has been a decrease of participation due to demographic reasons and the current economic situation; the demographic and economic influences were briefly described. This has also lead sailors not to take so much care of their boats and some use the same sails for years. Paul commented on the difference between North American Portsmouth System and USPHRF and how they score races in a slightly different way. He also noted that the North America Portsmouth System is developing updated methods for collecting and distributing its data and handicaps.

Paul Ansfield commented on the four days workshop he conducted in Santo Domingo for the Dominican Sailing Federation, on determine PHRF handicaps, administration and management of a PHRF system.

(d) RYA Portsmouth Yardstick
No report was given.

(e) PHRF Argentina
No report was given.

(f) HN France
Daniel Pillons showed the Committee the HN France situation where it appears that 4600 certified yachts are sailing by mean of a table with 1515 references. That table is built around a backbone of 400 speeds coming from the Speed Observatory. Samplings used by Speed Observatory (78000 perfs in 8700 races), growths with 622 races and 5300 usable individual performances last year. For accepting specific yachts, (5% of total) an inter fleet marriage is now fully operational between HN, ORC and Classics.

4. Empirical Handicapping Worldwide
The chairman gave an overview of empirical handicapping systems worldwide. Paul Ansfield noted that the current list of handicap systems does not reflect the reality and commented on the little amount of data collected due mainly to the lack or reliable information from other handicap systems used worldwide. A suggestion was raised to write a letter to all ISAF MNA’s to see what empirical handicap system was used, if any.

David Irish noted that from past experience, responses from MNA’s are normally low in number and recommended that other alternatives should be found.

Mike Urwin (Observer) suggested using search engines or even the ORC website (www.orc.org) were a list of 40 Rating Offices around the World can be found.

Helmut Czasny (Observer) also suggested talking to relevant people during the conference as direct contact is often more efficient than a generic letter sent to all MNA’s and may generate much better results.

5. Standard Parameters and Notations for Description of Boats
(a) Progress made by the working party
The chairman noted that the working party established in 2006 has been working since in its development in a document with an increasing number of abbreviations some of which are not included in the ERS.

The Chairman made contact with Dina Kowalyshyn, chair of the Equipment Control Sub-committee and Jacques Lehn, chair of the Oceanic and Offshore Committee, in order to re-invigorate the working party and suggested transfer the responsibility to the Equipment Control Sub-committee. Ken Kershaw noted that this would need a change in the Terms of
Reference in the Regulations. Paul Ansfield and David Irish noted that as the Equipment Control Sub-committee has got no offshore representative it would be better to transfer the working party responsibility to Jacques Lehn.

(b) Submission 075-10
The Committee agreed with the submission without any further comment

(c) Submission 077-10
The Committee agreed with the submission without any further comment

6. Strategic Plan and Future Work

(a) Handicap related issues in the ISAF Website.
The chairman noted that empirical handicap related issues are still difficult to find in the ISAF website but he was overall satisfied with the content

(b) Work Plan and Terms of Reference.
The Chairman noted last year’s submission 007-09 which proposed the incorporating of rating systems into the Sub-committee Terms of Reference and was rejected. He noted that in the long term rating systems and empirical handicap systems should sit together on the same table.

(c) Feasibility of a forum to discuss handicap issues.
The general view was that the high cost of setting up a forum together with the amount of work involved in running it, for a low expected participation, makes it unfeasible at the present moment.

(d) Progress about standard Format.
Daniel Pillons gave a presentation about standard format. He noted the fact that exchanged information among countries using different languages is sometimes a problem and he has developed a template for easy exchange of information easy to understand. Mike Urwin (Observer) noted that all new boats should be sold with a pen drive which should include all the technical information in a standard format, but it was noted that this information would only be accurate the first day and that it was necessary to follow up the boat through its life and note all the changes that it will undertake.

(e) Communications of handicappers worldwide.
The exchange of information between France and Norway was commented and the need for general improvement in communication was noted.

(f) Plans for the future were already discussed during the meeting.

7. Presentation of Special Topics
A question was raised about how to treat violations of the rules. The general feeling was that only a very small percentage of boats (about 5%) give distorted data in order to obtain a favourable handicap; committee members and observers commented on the different penalties imposed on different countries.

8. Listed Empirical Handicap Systems
A discussion was held about listing or recognizing Empirical Handicap Systems by the Empirical Handicap Sub-committee.
Paul Ansfield noted that listing or recognizing an MNA’s Empirical Handicap System by accepting an application that meets specific criteria is not a role for the Sub-committee to play is not consistent with the Sub-committee terms of reference and is inconsistent with ISAF Regulations. He also noted that the Sub-committee terms of reference do not imply committee authority and responsibility for this activity or otherwise certifying or licensing an Empirical Handicap System.

There was consensus that the full committee should discuss the appropriateness of listing an Empirical Handicapping System only if an application is approved but there were no plans for any such discussion and related action.

9. Any Other Business

There being no further business the meeting was closed.