

## **IHO Input to the Report of the UN Secretary General on Oceans and Law of the Sea**

The following notes provide information on activities of the International Hydrographic Organization that are relevant to the report of the UN Secretary General on Oceans and Law of the Sea. They are provided in response to letter *LOS/SG report/2013* dated 12 December 2012.

### **Executive Summary**

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is the intergovernmental body that brings together the national hydrographic agencies responsible for the conduct of hydrographic surveys, the production of nautical charts and the distribution of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) in accordance with the requirement set out in the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). The current membership of the IHO comprises only 81 Member States, out of more than 180 States that have a recognisable coastline and therefore a dependency on hydrography and nautical charting.

As every human activity conducted in, on or under the sea depends on knowing the depth and the nature of the seafloor and an understanding of the tides and the currents, hydrography is an essential foundation to the development of the *Blue Economy*.

Yet, mankind has higher resolution maps of the Moon and Mars than for most of the seas and oceans. This has a big impact on what mankind can do at sea today in a safe, and economical and sustainable way. It is impeding progress and economic development in many, if not most, States. This is a major concern as many of the national hydrographic agencies represented in the IHO are reporting that government-sponsored surveying activity is now decreasing because of financial pressures and conflicting priorities in home waters. The IHO stand ready to assist, advise and to coordinate national and regional surveying and charting priorities - but cannot do so without appropriate levels of government commitment and support.

All coastal States should be encouraged to ensure that their seas and coastal areas are properly surveyed and charted. All coastal States should consider membership of the IHO as an important way to ensure that appropriate and effective national hydrographic services can be implemented in their waters. This will directly support safety of navigation, protection of the marine environment and unlock benefits from the *Blue Economy*.

Through its active technical and capacity building programmes conducted in close liaison with other international organizations, notably the International Maritime Organization and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the IHO supports the development and improvement of hydrographic and charting standards, products and services, especially in digital formats. These capabilities contribute directly to safe navigation, informed marine spatial



particular, the IHO is ensuring that feedback from mariners and equipment manufacturers are taken into account in the relevant IHO standards. The IHO continues to encourage and assist its Member

22. The IHO maintains a list of Law of the Sea Experts which is available on the IHO website ([www.iho.int](http://www.iho.int)).

### **Capacity Building**

23. Capacity Building continues to be a major component of the IHO Work Programme and a key focus for most of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions. This effort benefits from dedicated support received from the Nippon Foundation of Japan and the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs of the Republic of Korea. The programme is implemented in close cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations such as IMO and international organizations such as IALA. The main capacity building activities conducted in the last twelve months include:

*Technical and advisory visits:*

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