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**REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE CONVENTION AND  
MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORGANIZATION**

**Report on the status of membership of the International Hydrographic Organization**

**Submitted by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)**

**SUMMARY**

*Executive summary:* This document reports on the status of membership of the IHO and recalls repeated recommendations of the IMO Secretary-General, endorsed by the IMO Assembly and Council, that IMO Member States that are not yet Members of the IHO should give favourable consideration to joining that Organization. The document also informs that, for Member States of the United Nations applying for membership of the IHO, it is no longer required to await the approval of two thirds of the existing Member States.

*Strategic direction:* 2

*High-level action:* 2.0.1

*Output:* No related provisions

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 10

*Related document:* A 27/SR.11; A 26/SR.10; C 110/D, C 110/19/1; C 108/D; C 106/D; C 105/D; C 104/D; C 102/D; MSC/Circ.1179 and NAV 54/25

**Background**

1 The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is an intergovernmental consultative and technical organization established in 1921 to support the safety of navigation and the protection of the marine environment. The object of the Organization is to:

- promote the use of hydrography for the safety of navigation and all other marine purposes and to raise global awareness of the importance of hydrography;
- improve global coverage, availability and quality of hydrographic data, information, products and services and to facilitate access to such data, information, products and services;

- improve global hydrographic capability, capacity, training, science and techniques;
- establish and enhance the development of international standards for hydrographic data, information, products, services and techniques and to achieve the greatest possible uniformity in the use of these standards;
- give authoritative and timely guidance on all hydrographic matters to States and international organizations;
- facilitate coordination of hydrographic activities among the Member States; and
- enhance cooperation on hydrographic activities among States on a regional basis.

2 In its commitment to IMO, the IHO and its Member States have devoted much effort to achieving adequate coverage of Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC). Adequate coverage was defined in 2008 (NAV 54) as "... equivalent to the best available paper chart coverage of either a Hydrographic Office providing global coverage or the Hydrographic Office of the Coastal State." While this effort has been successful, there is also an underlying requirement to improve the global coverage and the accuracy of source hydrographic data. The data already collected from hydrographic surveys executed in the past often proves to be inadequate in the light of new survey techniques, newer, larger ships, and new or expanded routing requirements. ENCs, like paper charts, should be based on more accurate hydrographic data in order to best serve their purpose and, in particular, to better support mariners at sea; however, this is often not the case, as reported in the IHO publication C-55 *Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide*.

3 The focus on the Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) and ENC coverage by IMO, and by mariners more generally, has drawn particular attention to the state of many nautical charts around the world, and the fact that they are based, in many cases, on old or inadequate hydrographic information and that there are still many parts of the world where there is no data available at all. This situation was brought to the attention of IMO Member Governments through circular MSC/Circ.1179 of 24 May 2005.

4 As explained in the above referenced circular, the provision of hydrographic services is an obligation for the Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). The details of this obligation are described in regulation 9 of the revised chapter V of SOLAS that entered into force in July 2002. This regulation specifies in particular that:

"1 Contracting Governments undertake to arrange for the collection and compilation of hydrographic data and the publication, dissemination and keeping up to date of all nautical information necessary for safe navigation.

(...)

3 Contracting Governments undertake to ensure the greatest possible uniformity in charts and nautical publications and to take into account, whenever possible, relevant international resolutions and recommendations.\*

(...)

\* Refer to the appropriate resolutions and recommendations adopted by the International Hydrographic Organization."

5 Yet while almost all coastal States are Parties to the SOLAS Convention, less than two thirds of them have arrangements in place to collect and provide maritime safety information; and only half of them have arrangements in place to provide adequate hydrographic surveying and nautical chart services and are members of the IHO.

6 Noting this situation and considering that the objectives of the IHO are closely related to those of IMO, the Secretary-General has recommended repeatedly that those IMO Member States that are not Members of the IHO give favourable consideration to joining that Organization. This recommendation has been endorsed by the Assembly at its twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions and by the Council at its 102nd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 108th and 110th sessions.

### **Status of membership of the IHO**

7 Expanding its membership is a standing strategic objective of the IHO, pursued through its capacity-building programme and supported by the IHO Publication M-2 – *The Need for National Hydrographic Services* – which explains the rationale for joining the IHO and the accession process. The Publication M-2 can be downloaded from the IHO website: [www.iho.int](http://www.iho.int) or directly at this link: [http://www.iho.int/iho\\_pubs/misc/M-2\\_3.0.6\\_E\\_122016.pdf](http://www.iho.int/iho_pubs/misc/M-2_3.0.6_E_122016.pdf).

8 Facilitating the accession of States to the IHO was one of the objectives of the Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the IHO which entered into force on 8 November 2016. One of the principal changes to the Convention contained in the Protocol was to remove the requirement for States applying for membership of the IHO which are Members of the United Nations to await the approval of two thirds of the existing Member States. This requirement previously entailed an average wait of two to three years before the required majority could be achieved.

9 Since the revision to the Convention entered into force, two States – Malta and Vanuatu – have joined the IHO, bringing the membership of the Organization to 87 Member States, as shown in the annex.

### **Action requested of the Council**

10 The Council is invited to:

- .1 reiterate its recommendation that IMO Member States that are not Member States of the IHO give favourable consideration to joining that Organization;
- .2 invite IMO Member States that are not Member States of the IHO to report on their intentions; and
- .3 take any other action as it may consider appropriate.

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**ANNEX**

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE IHO**  
(as at 18 May 2017)

<b>Members</b>	<b>Year of first accession</b>
Algeria	1996
Argentina	1921
Australia	1921
Bahrain	1992
Bangladesh	2001
Belgium	1921
Brazil	1921
Brunei Darussalam	2015
Cameroon	2012
Canada	1951
Chile	1921
China	1921
Colombia	1969
Croatia	1996
Cuba	1950
Cyprus	1991
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	1987
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1970 (suspended since 1983)
Denmark	1921
Dominican Republic	1957 (suspended since 1983)
Ecuador	1934
Egypt	1922
Estonia	1997
Fiji	1983
Finland	1957
France	1921
Georgia	2015
Germany	1926
Greece	1921
Guatemala	1957
Iceland	1957
India	1956
Indonesia	1951
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1961
Ireland	2007
Italy	1921
Jamaica	2000
Japan	1921
Kuwait	2002
Latvia	2005
Malaysia	1975
Malta	2017
Mauritius	2005
Mexico	2002
Monaco	1921
Montenegro	2013
Morocco	1999
Mozambique	1998

Myanmar	1956
Netherlands	1921
New Zealand	1947
Nigeria	1976
Norway	1921
Oman	1987
Pakistan	1957
Papua New Guinea	1987
Peru	1921
Philippines	1955
Poland	1926
Portugal	1921
Qatar	2007
Republic of Korea	1957
Romania	2007
Russian Federation	1977
Saudi Arabia	2007
Serbia	1950 (suspended since 2013)
Singapore	1972
Slovenia	2002
South Africa	1951
Spain	1921
Sri Lanka	1983
Suriname	1985
Sweden	1921
Syrian Arab Republic	1975
Thailand	1921
Tonga	1995
Trinidad and Tobago	1980
Tunisia	1997
Turkey	1950
Ukraine	1998
United Arab Emirates	1992
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1921
United States of America	1922
Uruguay	1936
Vanuatu	2017
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	1961
Viet Nam	2015

**States having applied to join the IHO under the provisions applicable before 8 November 2016**

Bulgaria	application approved in 1992
Congo	application submitted in 2015
Haiti	application approved in 2012
Mauritania	application approved in 1991
Sierra Leone	application approved in 2010
Solomon Islands	application submitted in 2015