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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

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document reports on the status of membership of IHO, following repeated recommendations of the Secretary-General of IMO, endorsed by the IMO Assembly and Council, that Member States of IMO that are not yet members of IHO should give favourable consideration to joining that Organization
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	2
<i>High-level action:</i>	2.0.1
<i>Planned output:</i>	No related provisions
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 10
<i>Related documents:</i>	A 27/SR.11; A 26/SR.10; C 108/D; C 106/D; C 105/D; C 104/D; C 102/D; NAV 54/25 and MSC/Circ.1179

Background

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

- the coordination of the activities of national hydrographic offices;
- the greatest possible uniformity in nautical charts and documentation;
- the adoption of reliable and efficient methods of carrying out and exploiting hydrographic surveys; and
- the development of sciences in the field of hydrography and the techniques employed in descriptive oceanography.

2 In accordance with its commitment to IMO, IHO and its Member States have devoted much effort to achieving adequate coverage of the Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC). Adequate coverage was defined in 2008, at the fifty-fourth session of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (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 and newer, larger ships, and new or expanded routing requirements. ENCs, like paper charts, should be based on more accurate hydrographic data in order to serve their purpose best and especially in order to support mariners at sea better. Presently, this is often not the case, as reported in IHO Publication C-55 "*Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide*".

3 The recent focus on 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 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 are no data available at all. This situation was brought to the attention of IMO Member Governments in 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 contracting Governments to the International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). The details of this obligation are described in regulation 9 of 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 take into account, whenever possible, relevant international resolutions and recommendations.**

(...)

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

5 Yet only about half of the States Parties to the SOLAS Convention have arrangements in place to provide adequate hydrographic surveying and nautical chart services and are Members of IHO.

6 Noting this situation and considering that the objectives of IHO are closely related to those of IMO, the Secretary-General has recommended repeatedly that those IMO Member States that are not members of 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 and 108th sessions.

Status of membership of IHO

7 Expanding its membership is a standing strategic objective of IHO. It is pursued through its capacity-building programme and supported by IHO publication M-2 – *The Need for National Hydrographic Services*, which explains the rationale for joining IHO and the accession process. Publication M-2 can be downloaded from the IHO website at www.iho.int.

8 IHO comprises 81 Member States. Eight further States have applied for membership, as shown in the annex to this document. Five of them have received the approval of the required majority, in two cases more than ten years ago, but have not yet deposited their instruments of accession.

9 Little progress has been achieved over the last five years with only one State (Cameroon) joining the Organization during this period.

Action requested of Council

10 The Council is invited to reiterate its recommendation that IMO Member States that are not Member States of IHO give favourable consideration to joining it; invite IMO Member States that are not members of IHO to report on their intentions; and take any other action as it considers appropriate.

ANNEX

MEMBERSHIP OF IHO

(as at 31 May 2013)

Members	Year of first accession
Algeria	1996
Argentina	1921
Australia	1921
Bahrain	1992
Bangladesh	2001
Belgium	1921
Brazil	1921
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
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
Mauritius	2005
Mexico	2002
Monaco	1921
Morocco	1999
Mozambique	1998

Members	Year of first accession
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 in 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
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	1961

Membership pending

Brunei Darussalam	application in 2012, not yet approved
Bulgaria	application approved in 1992
Georgia	application in 2012, not yet approved
Haiti	application approved in 2012
Mauritania	application approved in 1991
Montenegro	application approved in 2012
Sierra Leone	application approved in 2010
Viet Nam	application in 2011, not yet approved