

# FIRST IHO ASSEMBLY TO ELECT SECRETARY-GENERAL AND DIRECTORS

## 5 Questions to Gilles Bessero



During the first IHO Assembly taking place from 24 to 28 April 2017 in Monaco, the represented Member States will elect the new Secretary-General and Directors. The nominees present themselves by answering the same 5 questions. This multi-interview, is available at [www.hydro-international.com/iho-2017](http://www.hydro-international.com/iho-2017). Mr Gilles Bessero (France), nominated for Secretary-General and Director, answers 5 questions.

*Giuseppe Angrisano and Joost Boers, Hydro International*

### ***Some coastal states are not yet members of the IHO. How do you envisage improving the number of the IHO Member States?***

I would continue to focus on raising awareness of governments and other decision-makers on the importance of hydrographic services in relation to their role in supporting the sustainable development of the Blue Economy (through MSDI) and in accordance with international obligations (SOLAS and UNCLOS) or commitments (UN 2030 Agenda).

### ***One of the main objectives of the IHO has, for a number of years, been to foster the hydrographic capabilities of developing countries. How do you envisage continuing and possibly improving the IHO's actions in this field?***

The revised IHO Capacity Building (CB) Strategy adopted in 2014 provides clear directions. Increasing the resources (both in-kind and financial) allocated to the CB Work Programme (hence the importance of increasing IHO membership) and further developing the 'Deliver as one' approach with other international organisations are key factors. Assisting recipient governments in taking full ownership of the CB concept in their national interest is also essential.

### ***IHO has established Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with several other Organisations, Associations and Institutions. In particular, the IHO is a permanent observer of the UNO Assembly. In which way will you coordinate the relations with those entities in order to obtain support in meeting the IHO objectives?***

I would be attentive to maintaining close personal contacts with the leaders of our partner Organisations, Associations and Institutions and to implementing actively, on behalf of the IHO, the relevant provisions agreed in the various MoUs, in particular when a periodic review is called for. I would also ensure that the Secretariat continues to be actively involved in relevant UN-led initiatives and fora.

### ***The private industry (PI) participates in oceanographic, hydrographic and cartographic activities with surveys, instruments and software for data analysis and electronic charts production. How would you deal with the PI to optimise its contribution to the IHO?***

I am convinced that the active participation of industry is key to implementing IHO objectives, including CB, as acknowledged by previous IH Conferences. I am all in favour of proactive interaction with industry at all levels of the IHO, while ensuring an even playing field in terms of contracting opportunities. Close partnership with international organisations representing the various industry sectors is essential, in particular, to develop suitable IHO standards.

***Hydrographic data are managed, by the IHO, in a Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure. How do you see their use by the general public beyond their use for ENCs?***

The IHO encourages HOs to evolve towards a data-centric concept and connect their data to SDIs. In my view, the beneficiaries are all maritime stakeholders -including, but not limited to, mariners- who need the data to plan or conduct any activity on, in and under the sea.

Mr. **Gilles Bessero** has about 30 years of experience in conducting hydro-oceanographic activities at sea and ashore. He was the director general of SHOM and French National Hydrographer from 2005 to 2010. He also held senior management positions at the French Defence Procurement Administration and was elected as IHO Director in 2012.

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