

FIRST IHO ASSEMBLY TO ELECT SECRETARY-GENERAL AND DIRECTORS

5 Questions to Mir Imdadul Haque



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. Commodore Mir Imdadul Haque (Bangladesh), nominated for Director, answers 5 questions.

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

The willingness of individual states is the key factor for applying the membership of IHO. Thus, I believe in increasing the number of IHO members through motivation / awareness. Thus, growing government eagerness of non-member states is the prime factor here.

It has been experienced that there are many coastal states of Africa and a few countries of America, Europe and Asia that are not well conversant or aware of the potentialities of the IHO. They also do not realise the requirement of hydrographic services for the use of their maritime resources; though their economy is in many ways dependent upon maritime activities. It has also been noticed that, due to the political crisis / instability of governments., many countries are not in a position to apply for IHO membership. Furthermore, there are a number of countries that are not applying for membership due to their lack of knowledge on IHO activities and their preconceived ideas about the imposing of unbearable responsibilities by the IHO after obtaining membership. In view of the above, I think following steps may be considered to increase the number of IHO members:

- Identify the causes of the non-responsive attitude of the states. In this regard, information about unwillingness may be sought from local / regional UN offices, NGOs, IMOs, etc. Besides, IHO could take a diplomatic approach to get that information.
- Depending upon the type of limitations, all non-member states to be listed under a separate specific group. Thereafter, a dedicated action plan is to be followed to convince the non willing coastal states. Several options in this regard are appended below:
 - Invite Member States to the regional hydrographic conferences as observer to gain confidence on IHO's activities.
 - Show the example of Bangladesh - how a weaker hydrographic capable country can play a strong role in the world hydrographic community with the assistance of the IHO and other Member States.
 - IHO staff could visit potential non-member states to convince the government authorities by appropriate presentation of IHO/IHO's function, role, capacity, etc.
 - Diplomatic channels to be utilised as much as possible.
 - Neighbouring Member States of a non-member state may be assigned to play a sustainable role on confidence building measures.
 - If possible, with the help of IHO member states/ IMO / IOC/ non-government shipping agencies, some hard line measures may be imposed on maritime affairs to potential non-member coastal states.

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 actions in fostering Hydrographic capabilities that could be taken are:

- Highlighting the capacity building measures by managing more funds for hands-on training.
- Developed countries may be requested to host hydrography-related training, symposium and seminars to developing countries.
- Pursue regional hydrographic bodies to foster more cooperation.
- Encourage hydrographic equipment manufacturers to interact with the developing countries for enhancing their capabilities.

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?

In my view, the best option is to highlight the achievements of the IHO in maritime affairs since its inception by presenting the facts and figures. At the same time existing limitations/shortfalls/hurdles are to be brought forward so as to obtain their assistance in this regard.

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 would prefer to request PIs to increase publicity through effective demonstration of their products to earn the confidence of the hydrographic community. They will be advised to provide some products 'on a test' basis. Later on, feedback reports from the users will be published in international fora for better understanding and confidence building of their products.

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 ENC's?

The general public can use marine spatial data in the following ways:

- They can use marine spatial data for harnessing Blue Economy.
- Marine data can be connected with the national spatial data infrastructures for having seamless use of the data.
- When these data are available in the public domain the general public can access it for economic benefit as well as amateur uses of the seas like tourism.
- Marine life can be conserved through these data.
- Awareness among people about the best use of the sea can be ensured.
- Marine Spatial data can play an important role in pollution control operation at sea.
- Data can be used for coastal zone management.
- They can be used for disaster forecast, prevention and management.

Commodore **Mir Imdadul Haque**, (H), ndc, psc, BN is the senior most hydrographer of Bangladesh Navy. As the director of Hydrography, he organises all sorts of hydrographic and oceanographic operations in the Bay of Bengal and Bangladesh waters. He has 23 years of hydrographic survey experience from very conventional to modern digital surveys. With his relentless efforts, Bangladesh was able to introduce itself to the footstep of ENC production from ammonia print charts.