

WORLD HYDROGRAPHY DAY (WHD) 2015

Celebration in Monaco with Japanese Coast Guard



This year, the International Hydrographic Bureau Directing Committee organised the celebration of the WHD on 30 June so as to take advantage of the presence in Monaco's harbour of the Japanese Coast Guard training ship Kojima. This ship (115m length, 2,950 gross tons, 18 knots cruise speed) was carrying out the usual around the world cruise with 39 young Midshipmen on board.



The IHB president Robert Ward gave them an extended speech about the importance of the hydrography and the tasks of the IHO at the IHB headquarters. In particular, it was pointed out that the Japanese Hydrographic Department is one of the branches of the Japanese Coast Guard. "One of you", President Ward said, "may one day become the head of the Hydrographic Department".

The celebration of the WHD took place that evening on board of the Kojima in the presence of Prince of Monaco HSH Albert II, who was welcomed on board by the Commanding Officer, Captain Tetushi Mitsuya. Other personalities present were His Excellency the Ambassador of Japan Mr. Ichiro Ogasawara, His Excellency Mr. Tonelli, Monaco's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dr. Vladimir Ryabinin executive secretary of the

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

The IHB President gave a very interesting speech. He pointed out the continuous support that the Principality of Monaco has given to the IHO and to the IHB in particular for almost 95 years. He then explained the theme chosen by the IHO Member States for the WHD this year 'Our seas and waterways — yet to be fully charted and explored'. As a possible measure to fill out this gap the IHO recently adopted the concept of crowdsourced bathymetry in which depth data can be collected by any ship or boat using its regular navigation echo sounder as part of a normal voyage across the sea and along the coastline. This data will then be included in the IHO Data Centre for bathymetry, making it not only a data store but also the world portal to upload and download crowdsourced bathymetry.

The project of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) will benefit from this initiative. GEBCO was initiated by Prince of Monaco Albert I and now continues as a project shared by IHO and IOC. The presence of Dr. Ryabinin in the celebrations reinforced the concept expressed by the IHB president.

The ceremony was also attended by the members of the working group 'Nautical Information Provision (NIPWG)' (the successor of the previous Nautical Publications) who were in the IHB for the first meeting. This working group aims to develop and maintain guidance, resolutions and specifications to provide shipboard users with necessary and up-to-date information in a timely manner to allow for the planning of a safe route for the intended voyage and the safeguarding of the ship's navigation throughout the voyage. The participants included representatives of the IHO MS and representatives of industry, such as Jeppesen.

After the speech of president Ward, the Captain of Kojima, the Ambassador of Japan and the representative of the Midshipmen addressed the audience.

Drinks with typical Japanese food were served after the speeches.

The visit by Hydro International to this significant IHO yearly event was the perfect occasion to demonstrate the vitality of the IHO and of the IHB Directing Committee and staff. The services provided to the maritime community are improving and are proceeding at a fast pace. The number of new Member States is also growing significantly (when the author joined the IHB late 1992, there were 58 IHO MS; now there are 85 with new members pending). All this is due to the intense efforts of the IHB Directors supported by a strong nucleus of several collaborators (a total of 19 people are active in the IHB, including the Directing Committee) and by good cooperation of the IHO MS hydrographers and the representatives of the industry from all over the world.