

Hydro9



Hydro9, this year's International Federation of Hydrographic Society's annual conference, was presented by the Hydrographic Society of South Africa on 10 – 12 November 2009 in Cape Town (South Africa). The conference featured a strong slate of technical presentations, a well-supported exhibition, and a full social programme.

Cape Town is at the southwestern tip of Africa, anchoring the Cape of Good Hope, where the Indian Ocean and Atlantic Ocean meet. With its stunning vistas of Table Mountain and the sea, its important place in the history of navigation, unique natural history and dynamic culture, Cape Town was an inspiring location for a hydrographic conference. Cape Town will be one of the host cities for the 2010 Soccer World Cup, and the energy and enthusiasm associated with that event was already evident in the city.

'Enhancing Global Capacity' was the theme of Hydro9, which kicked off with a plenary session featuring three keynote speakers, each addressing a separate element of the theme. Captain Robert Ward, a director of the International Hydrographic Bureau, spoke on IHO capacity building activities; captain Abri Kampher, hydrographer of the South African Navy, developed the theme with a South African national and regional perspective; and captain Andrew Armstrong, co-director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - University of New Hampshire Joint Hydrographic Center, spoke on the role of education and individual competence in establishing and maintaining hydrographic capacity. As a counterbalance for the messages of the keynotes, the opening plenary included entertainment by the Cape Minstrels, one of the local minstrel groups that form an important part of Cape Town's unique culture.

The plenary was followed by two and a half days of technical presentation sessions at the main conference venue, the Cape Town Hotel School of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The well-attended technical programme covered a full range of contemporary hydrographic topics, including positioning, Lidar, sea floor characterisation, current measurement and swath mapping technology, ENCs and data standards, extended continental shelf mapping, AUV and personal watercraft hydrography, education and special hydrographic projects. The more than 250 delegates and technical presenters represented a variety of organisations from North America, Europe and Africa. The Hotel School provided very comfortable and convenient facilities for the technical programme, the audio-visual services were very efficiently delivered, and the HSSA conference organisers kept the conference running smoothly and the proceedings on schedule.

The conference exhibition - which was opened with a performance by the South African Navy Band, featuring African music and multiple marimba musicians - took place in a large tent looking over the sea on the lawn of the Hotel School. The large tent provided a spacious and well-laid out venue for nearly 40 exhibitors representing equipment manufacturer and software companies, surveying services providers and support firms, as well as government and academic institutions. A marina adjacent to the venue allowed for on-water demonstrations of hydrographic equipment. Although the windy weather restricted afloat demonstrations to the boat basin, delegates were able to see the displayed equipment installed and operating in the water.

No hydrographic conference would be complete without a social programme, and Hydro9 did not disappoint. A golf tournament preceded the conference, and evening ice-breaker and exhibitor receptions provided ample opportunity for social interaction among the delegates. The highlight of the social programme was a memorable South African-style banquet at a wine estate in the famous Stellenbosch wine region event featuring South African music, an amazing array of food (including African game), and the superb estate wine.

See more images in the [photo album of Hydro9](#)