

IHO Assembly: Mapping our Seas, Oceans and Waterways - More Important Than Ever



After nearly a century in Monaco, the IHO will enter its second century under a revised governance structure, when the 1st Session of the IHO Assembly will take place from 24 to 28 April 2017. This will replace the 5-yearly International Hydrographic Conferences that were held previously. Over 300 delegates representing the IHO's 87 Member States, together with representatives from international and non-governmental organisations and observers from other States and industry, will meet in the Auditorium Rainier III in Monaco.

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is the inter-governmental consultative and technical organisation whose principal aim is to ensure that all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are adequately surveyed and charted.

The Organization has been based in the Principality of Monaco since 1921 from where it provides the international standards for hydrography and nautical charting as well as fostering co-operation between countries in support of navigation safety at sea and the sustainable development of their maritime environment.

Oceans are Poorly Measured

There will be plenty for the IHO Assembly to consider at a time when mankind is looking ever more closely at the seas and oceans in terms of its environmental impact and its economic resources. Yet, our knowledge of most of the seas and oceans remains relatively poor. There are better maps of the Moon and Mars than for most of the oceans. IHO figures show that less than 15% of the deeper ocean waters have been directly measured, while up to 50% of the world's coastal waters have yet to be surveyed.

It is expected that HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco will open the IHO Assembly at 10:00 on 24 April 2017. The Assembly will consider a report of the progress made by the Organization in the development of technical standards and services since the last ordinary session of the International Hydrographic Conference in 2012. It will also review the achievements of the Inter-regional Coordination Programme, which covers key targets of the IHO's capacity building programme.

Several proposals submitted by the IHO Member States and the IHO Secretariat will be considered by the Assembly. These embrace a wide spectrum of activities and themes and will be taken into account in the consideration of a revised Strategic Plan, and the 2018-20 IHO Work Programme and Budget that the representatives of the Member States will adopt as part of the Assembly proceedings.

Technology Exhibitions

Technology in hydrographic systems and geospatial information will be on display in an Industry Exhibition in the Auditorium Rainier III, together with innovative products and services being displayed by Member States at the IHO Member States' Exhibition under the theme: 'From data collection to hydrographic products and services'.

Visiting Ships

Five visiting ships from Brazil, France, Italy, Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom are also expected in Port Hercule during the Assembly period, supporting the theme for World Hydrography Day in 2017 which is: 'Mapping our seas, oceans and waterways - more important than ever'.

Election of a New Secretary-General

The 1st Session of the IHO Assembly will conclude on Friday 28 April 2017 with the election of a new Secretary-General of the IHO and two Directors who will run and manage the IHO Secretariat for the next period between ordinary sessions of the Assembly, which will be held every three years.

