

## 32<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE IOC ASSEMBLY Paris, France, 21-30 June

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2023	
Task 1.1.9	Maintain relationship with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, including:
Task 1.1.9.1	General Assembly

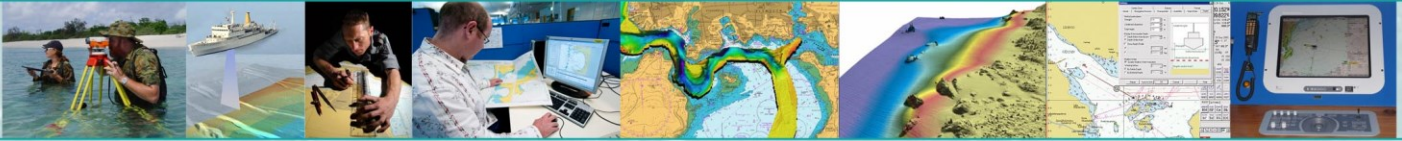
The 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IOC UNESCO Assembly was held in Paris from 21 to 30 June 2023, at the UNESCO headquarters. The IHO Secretariat participated at the Assembly as Observer, and was represented by Director Luigi Sinapi and Assistant Director Samuel Harper. The Chair of the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) Evert Flier (Norway) also attended the IOC Assembly. The participation of the IHO Secretariat and the GGC was limited to the days 26 and 27 June 2023, mainly dedicated to GEBCO and the UN Ocean Decade.



*IHO participating at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IOC Assembly*

The morning of 26 June was dedicated to the approval of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy 2023-2030 presented on Friday 23 June, for the discussion on the revision of the IOC Oceanographic Data Exchange (IODE) policy, the State of Ocean Report (StOR) 2022 and an update on the IOC/SDG 14 indicators, for which the IOC custodianship role was confirmed.

The afternoon of 26 June was mainly dedicated to GEBCO. GGC Chair, Mr Evert Flier presented the GEBCO Report, which covers the GEBCO activities for the period 2021 to 2023, with attention to the GEBCO Sub-Committees achievements over the last two years. He also highlighted a continuing and growing interest in the health and status of the oceans by many governments, international and philanthropic organizations and more generally by the public. The current heightened awareness and global focus on the ocean and related topics are resulting from a number of high profile initiatives, such as the United Nations 2030



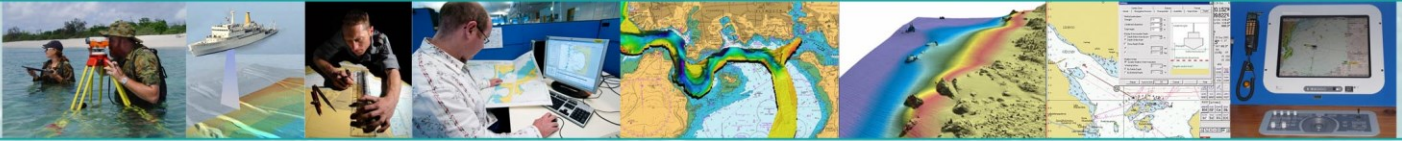
Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and most recently, the historic new Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), which have all highlighted the lack of comprehensive global bathymetric coverage, which is recognized as a fundamental element to achieve the goals of these initiatives. The Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project (Seabed 2030), which became operational in February 2018 and is now a UN Decade endorsed project, has been at the forefront of this focus. Seabed 2030 has created a global movement to search out new datasets to be added to the currently available bathymetry with the IHO DCDB being identified as the preferred raw data store.

IHO Assistant Director Samuel Harper presented the recent developments on the new GEBCO governance, which should be submitted for approval at the next GGC40 meeting in November 2023.

Finally, IHO Director Luigi Sinapi addressed the audience on how the seafloor knowledge has become one of the primary strategic objectives of both the GEBCO parent organizations, IHO and IOC, as well as the role of the Ocean increasingly understood and recognized in our society and in the global Earth system. For the IHO, Ocean knowledge – and GEBCO – is central to the strategic Goals 2 and 3 of the IHO Strategic Plan, respectively for “*Increasing the use of hydrographic data for the benefit of society*” and “*Participating actively in international initiatives related to the knowledge and the sustainable use of the Ocean*”. In this regard, Hydrography and Oceanography cannot go separate in the future, as they provide, via their applications and the common GEBCO programme, a unifying framework for scientists and stakeholders from diverse sectors to develop the scientific knowledge and the partnerships needed to accelerate and harness advances in ocean science. In his intervention, the DOALOS representative pointed out the United Nations Resolution 77/248, which at paragraphs 313 and 314 welcomes the work of GEBCO under IHO and IOC and, particularly, the progress made under the Seabed2030 project towards mapping the 100% of the ocean floor by 2030, encourage Member States to consider contributing to mechanisms that allow for the widest possible availability of all bathymetric data.



*Presentations on GEBCO delivered to the IOC Assembly – 26 June 2023*

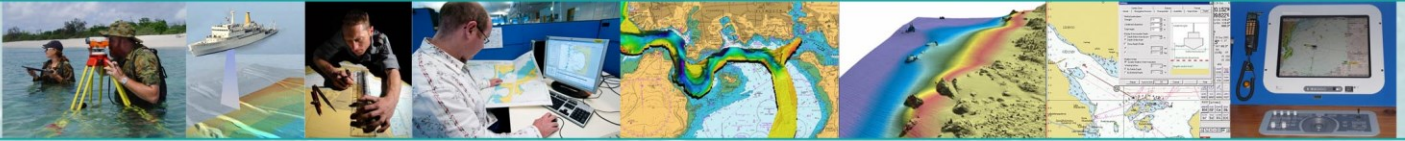


In the evening of 26 June, a reception to celebrate the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GEBCO was hosted by the IOC-UNESCO and sponsored by FUGRO, in the presence of H.E. Mme Anne-Marie Boisbouvier, Ambassador of Monaco to UNESCO, the IOC-UNESCO delegates, Industry and the Nippon-Foundation GEBCO-Seabed2030 project. The reception was preceded by speeches delivered by the IOC Executive-Secretary, IHO Director, Ambassador of Monaco to UNESCO, GGC Chair, representative of FUGRO and the Seabed2030 Director. It was remarked that the central role of GEBCO in mapping the Ocean, as the last challenge of humankind as a whole, and as a necessity which is driving the agendas of many international organizations and coastal and non-coastal States. The importance of Seabed2030 as an accelerator of GEBCO was highlighted and acknowledged by all the speakers and the participants at the reception, as well as the long-lasting support of the Principality of Monaco to GEBCO since its creation in 1903. The next celebration of the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of GEBCO will be the GEBCO week and Map the Gaps symposium planned in Monaco in November 2023.

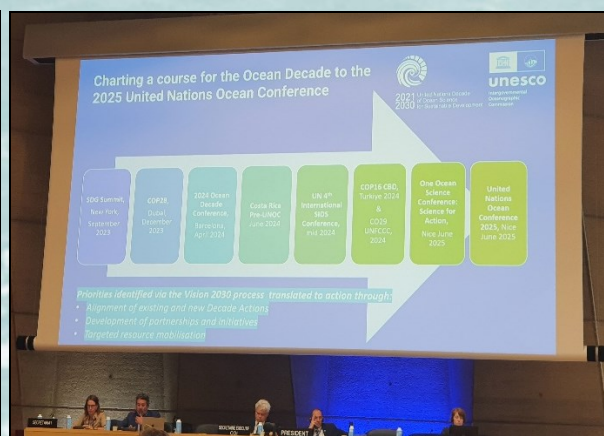


**Reception for 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GEBCO hosted by IOC-UNESCO**

During the session of 27 June, discussions were focused on the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and how the integrated system can support a wide range of applications, including GEBCO, through a network of regional and national alliances. On the GOOS'



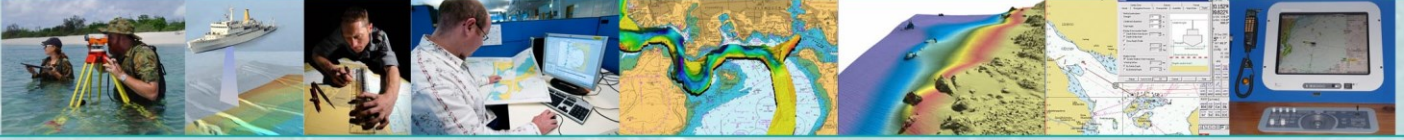
future, the Society requires a step-change in ocean observation to climate adaptation, coastal forecasting and management and then support governments in managing net-zero. A paper on Ocean Observations in areas of national jurisdiction was presented by the acting Director of GOOS. It was reported to the IOC Assembly that the IHO, through its Crowd Sourced Bathymetry Working Group (CSBWG), is actively investigating solutions to working within these constraints and would be most willing to cooperate with GOOS in the interests of sharing knowledge and experience.



**Presentation of the updates on Decade Implementation plan**

The last topic on 27 June was the update on the Decade Implementation plan made by the IOC Secretariat. The topic was preceded by a video on the Ocean Decade’s main enterprises described by Prof Margaret Leinen of San Diego University, co-chair of the Decade Advisory Board. Seabed2030 and DITTO (Digital Twins of The Oceans) were explicitly mentioned as examples for reaching the objectives of the Decade of Oceans. The Decade Coordination Office established under the IOC Secretariat presented the Decade evolution and key achievements over the last 12 months, highlighting the key challenges and the remaining gaps identified in 2022. An overview on the endorsed Decade Actions was provided, highlighting the numbers and the categories so far achieved (48 Programmes / 276 Projects / 84 Contributions), and on the established Ocean Decade Alliance, comprising 10 Patrons, including H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco. An overview on the Foundations Dialogue was also presented, mentioning the meeting held with the growing informal group of more than 30 philanthropic funders in mid-June at the Third Foundations Dialogue held in Monaco on 14 June 2023. Finally, a summary of the Vision for 2030, Mission, Strategic Objectives, Challenges, Outcomes and Priorities of the Decade were presented. The next important steps for the initiative will be the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, Spain, 10 to 14 April 2024, noting the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference planned to take place in Nice (France), to align existing and new Decade Actions, develop partnerships and initiatives, to target resource mobilization and then to set up perspectives for the next two years.

JUNE 2023



Documents and resolutions of the two days of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IOC Assembly are available at <https://oceanexpert.org/event/3837>, as well as the entire documentation of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IOC Assembly, including presentations, interventions and statements of the participants (IOC-UNESCO Member States and Observers).

**MONTHLY BRIEF MEETING REPORTS**