

IHO Centenary Celebrations, Monaco, 21 June 2021

Speech of HSH Prince Albert II

Secretary General,
Directors of the International
Hydrographic Organisation,
Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

We are gathered here today to celebrate a century of international cooperation in hydrography, to review the legacy of the IHO's work, and to learn what shape this will take going forward.

The beginnings of the IHO were guided by a vision and a concept. Motivated by the progressive mapping of the continents and the obvious benefits this presented, my great-great-grandfather developed the idea of mapping the oceans.

The idea became a programme - a programme that is consistent with the essence of the Principality of Monaco itself: the special connection with the Sea through its geographical location and a belief in international cooperation.

During the implementation of the programme, several ideas matured: firstly, that this should not be a one-time project, but a continuous effort; secondly, that mapping could and should serve not only to increase our knowledge but also contribute to the safe and sustainable use of the Seas and the Oceans.

The means to advance both these objectives was made possible following the establishment of the International Hydrographic Bureau.

The past century has provided numerous examples of when its use and effectiveness have been demonstrated. The principles guiding its creation have proven to be still valid to this day, despite evolutions in technology, or in society.

This happened in a century that suffered from discontinuity and disruptions. All the women and men who worked at the International Hydrographic Bureau and then at the Secretariat, as well as the Member States who provided ideas, invested their energy and persevered in promoting important issues, deserve credit.

The IHO as an International Organisation is indeed an independent body and my country provides it with facilities. But for me and for my ancestors, the IHO is a welcome guest: it embodies the principles that Monaco stands for: a focus on the marine environment, the capacity to reinvent itself and the belief in international cooperation across political, social and economic boundaries.

In this past century, the idea of preservation has been added to the notion of using the Seas and Oceans.

I recently commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of my great-great-grandfather's speech on the significance of the oceans by delivering a speech which echoed his message.

In studying his words, I realised that much of what he said is still relevant to this day. The history of both the Principality's initiatives in favour of the ocean and the IHO's activities have been mutually reinforcing each other since 1921.

Like my ancestors, I would like to reiterate the Principality of Monaco's continued support for the IHO, both as a Member State and as Host of the IHO Secretariat.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the 94 Member States. I encourage all of you to support the newly adopted strategic plan, with regards to actively participating in international initiatives related to the knowledge and the sustainable use of the Ocean.

I would like to mention in particular the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030.

This Decade will provide a common framework to ensure that ocean science can fully support countries' actions to sustainably manage the Oceans and more particularly to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is our commitment that will help us to reconcile the use and preservation of the Seas and Oceans.

I know I can count on every one of you to work towards that goal.

Thank you.