

## **BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANISATION (IHO)**

The International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), established in 1921, is an Inter-governmental technical consultative organisation established under the Convention on the IHO. The International Hydrographic Organisation currently comprises 88 Member States. The IHO actively engages all coastal and interested States to advance maritime safety and efficiency and sustainable use of the marine environment. One of its principal roles is the maintenance of relevant international standards and guidelines and the global coordination of the provision of hydrographic and nautical charting services. The Headquarters and Secretariat of the IHO is based in Monaco. It has no interest, mandate or authority to influence or interfere with the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of its Member States or their populations.

The Member States are usually represented by their National Hydrographer (Head of the national Hydrographic Service) who should be responsible for the provision of hydrography and nautical charting services required to meet the terms of Regulation 9 of Chapter V of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS V/9) and other UN instruments.

The IHO has encouraged the establishment of Regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHCs) to coordinate hydrographic and nautical charting services on a regional basis. There are 16 Regional Hydrographic Commissions around the world. The IHO Member States cooperate at the regional (through Regional Hydrographic Commissions) and global (through IHO) levels to coordinate hydrographic surveying and nautical charting not only in support of safer navigation, but also in support of the much wider application of hydrographic information for other purposes such as protection of the marine environment, scientific research and sustainable economic development. Hydrography is acknowledged as the fundamental enabler of the *blue economy*.

The IHO enjoys observer status in the United Nations and is particularly active in a number of its subordinate organisations, most notably the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). The IHO is recognised as the competent authority in respect of hydrography and nautical charting. As a consequence, all relevant UN instruments dealing with hydrography and nautical charting refer to the relevant standards and guidelines set by the IHO.

The IHO is funded by annual subscriptions from its Member States based on the registered tonnage of the fleet of each State. Among its activities, the IHO operates a Capacity Building programme that provides targeted training and technical assistance aimed at improving nautical charting and the delivery of maritime safety information in regions, particularly for developing countries. The IHO Capacity Building programme is funded from IHO Budget together with additional contributions from some Member States and various philanthropic organizations.

More information about the IHO is available at: [\*\*www.iho.int\*\*](http://www.iho.int)