



Participation in the Georgia International Maritime Forum (GIMF 2026), Batumi, Georgia, 7–8 September 2026

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2026.

Task 1.1.15 Maintain relationships with other international and observer organizations when their agendas have relevance to the programme of the IHO.

High level summary

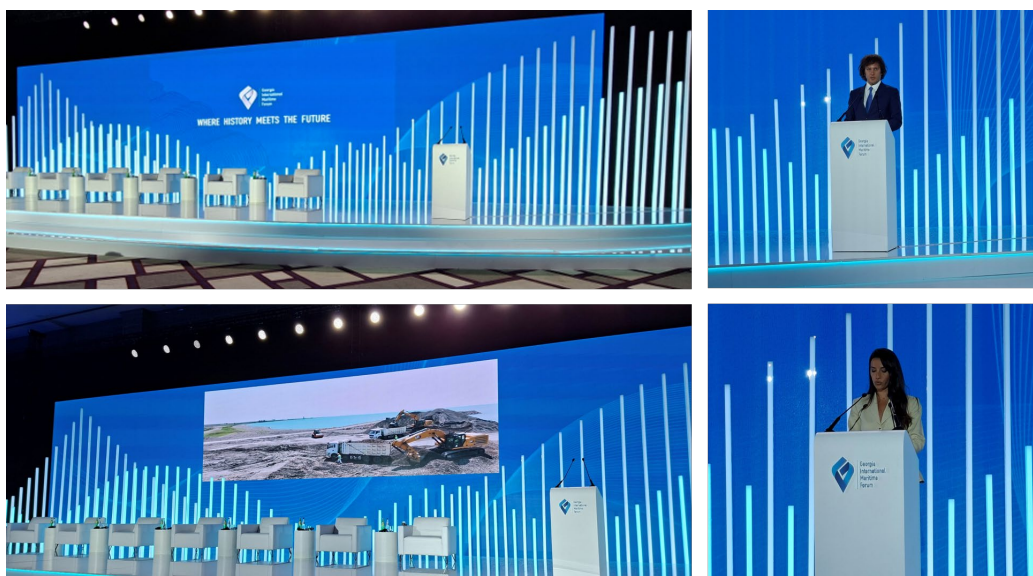
- GIMF 2026, held in Batumi under the theme “Where Seas Meet Corridors”, brought together around 300 delegates from governments, maritime administrations, international organizations, industry, finance and academia. Discussions focused on Black Sea and Middle Corridor connectivity, maritime governance, digital transformation, sustainable shipping and supply-chain resilience.
- The IHO Secretary-General participated in Panel II, “International Cooperation in Maritime Governance”, conducted as a moderated Q&A with senior representatives of IALA, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds) and the U.S. Export Control and Related Border Security programme. The exchange addressed practical cooperation, maritime safety and security, and implementation of international standards at regional level.
- The IHO contribution focused on the hydrographic requirements for restoring navigational confidence after mine-countermeasure operations, including targeted resurvey of critical areas, timely updating of official nautical information and reinforcement of national capability through regional coordination and common IHO standards. It also clarified the respective roles of States and the IHO in relation to authoritative hydrographic data and information sharing, highlighting the value of S-100 as a common digital framework.
- The Forum provided useful strategic visibility for the IHO at the beginning of the new Secretary-General’s mandate. Georgian media and IHO/partner communications highlighted hydrography, interoperable digital information and international cooperation as enablers of safe, efficient and resilient maritime corridors.

Details:

Georgia International Maritime Forum 2026, Batumi, 7–8 September 2026

At the invitation of the Government of Georgia and the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia (MTA), the IHO Secretary-General Rear Admiral Luigi Sinapi participated in GIMF 2026, held in Batumi on 7–8 September. The Forum, under the theme “Where Seas Meet Corridors”, provided a high-level platform for discussion on maritime connectivity, the strategic importance of the Middle Corridor, digital transformation, sustainable shipping and supply-chain resilience.

The opening ceremony included senior representatives of the Georgian Government and the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization. Approximately 300 delegates attended, including ministers, heads of maritime administrations, international organizations, financial institutions, industry and academia. The programme linked transport infrastructure with maritime governance, regional delivery of international standards, digital maritime systems, port competitiveness and resilience. This was particularly relevant to the IHO because effective maritime corridors depend not only on physical infrastructure, but also on reliable knowledge of the marine environment and authoritative information that can be used consistently by ships, ports and administrations.



Georgian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs at GIMF2026 Opening ceremony

Panel II - International Cooperation in Maritime Governance, 7 September 2026

The IHO Secretary-General participated in Panel II together with Ms Karen Chaisson; IALA Secretary-General Francis Zachariae; BSEC Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu; IMSO Director General Laurent Parenté; and IOPC Funds Director Gaute Sivertsen. The session was conducted through moderated questions and answers, allowing each organization to address practical aspects of cooperation, regional implementation and the contribution of international standards to maritime safety and resilience.



Discussions and participants in Panel II

In response to questions on Black Sea mine-countermeasure operations, the IHO contribution distinguished between removing the explosive threat and restoring navigational confidence. For safe operational use, critical areas such as ports, approaches, traffic routes, anchorages and locations affected by detonations, wrecks or seabed change must be checked and the corresponding official nautical information updated. Modern multibeam systems, side-scan sonar and uncrewed platforms can accelerate data acquisition, but effective recovery also depends on trained personnel, processing

capacity, quality control and rapid dissemination of validated information. As hydrographic capacity is not uniform across the region, coordination and common IHO standards remain important practical enablers.

The discussion also addressed hydrographic data sharing. The Secretary-General clarified that national Hydrographic Offices remain responsible for authoritative national information and that the IHO is not a central repository into which States must transfer all raw survey data. The IHO provides standards, regional coordination and the common technical language needed for national products and services to work together. For wider bathymetric knowledge, States may also contribute, where appropriate, through mechanisms such as the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry and GEBCO. S-100 is especially relevant in reducing technical barriers and enabling authoritative marine information to operate within a common digital framework.

Media engagement and external visibility

The Forum also provided a useful communication opportunity. Media exchanges focused on the role of modern hydrography in supporting safe and efficient navigation along Black Sea and global maritime corridors and on the value of GIMF as a platform bringing together governments, maritime administrations, ports, industry and international organizations. The core message was that hydrography is an essential part of the infrastructure of maritime connectivity because it provides the surveys, official charts and increasingly dynamic digital information on which safe navigation depends.

Georgian Public Broadcasting (1TV) reported the Secretary-General's assessment of the growing international relevance of GIMF and highlighted Georgia's role as a connecting country in the Black Sea region. IHO and partner-organization social media similarly emphasized interoperable ocean data, international cooperation and the practical delivery of global standards at regional level. This communication extended the visibility of the IHO beyond the specialist hydrographic community and placed its work in the broader context of transport, connectivity and maritime governance.

Overall assessment and follow-up

Participation in GIMF 2026 contributed directly to IHO Work Programme Task 1.1.15 by strengthening relations with international and regional organizations whose activities intersect with hydrography, maritime safety, digital navigation and ocean governance. Its main value for the IHO was strategic positioning and direct engagement with peer organizations and Georgian authorities rather than the adoption of an IHO-specific technical decision.

The moderated Panel II format enabled hydrographic issues to be connected directly with wider Black Sea security, resilience and connectivity concerns. In particular, resurvey requirements, chart updating, national capability, data interoperability and S-100 were presented as practical elements in the safe and efficient operation of maritime corridors and as areas where international standards can translate cooperation into operational results.

Follow-up should maintain dialogue with the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia and the Georgian State Hydrographic Service through the relevant IHO mechanisms and continue cooperation with IMO, IALA, IMSO, IOPC Funds, BSEC and other partners where international standards, digital services and regional implementation intersect. Future IHO participation in GIMF should be considered when the programme offers comparable opportunities to advance hydrographic capacity, S-100 implementation and the role of authoritative marine geospatial information in regional connectivity.