The Official Visit to Japan

Tokyo and others, Japan, 19-24 October 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

- The IHO Secretary-General conducted the official visit to Japan from 19 to 24 October 2026 to strengthen technical cooperation and further enhance the longstanding partnership between Japan and the IHO.
- The high-level meetings with senior government officials highlighted the importance of the IHO's work, including the digital transformation in hydrography and capacity development, and reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening Japan-IHO technical cooperation.
- The IHO Secretary-General expressed his sincere gratitude to The Nippon Foundation for its generous support of seabed mapping and capacity development initiatives and discussed opportunities for further cooperation with the IHO.
- During the on-site visit to the JICA hydrographic training course, the IHO Secretary-General commended the organizers and encouraged the international trainees to contribute to the future development of hydrography.

Details:

At the invitation of the Government of Japan, the official visit to Japan took place from 19 to 24 October 2026, aimed at enhancing the ongoing technical cooperation between Japan and the IHO. The IHO Secretariat was represented by the IHO Secretary-General, Rear Admiral Luigi Sinapi.

The following high-level and technical meetings with the IHO Secretary-General were held in Tokyo during his visit:

A. Visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan on 19 October, involving a courtesy call on Mr Yasutaka Nakasone (State Minister for Foreign Affairs), as well as a meeting with Mr Masatoshi Sugiura (Director-General / Assistant Minister (Ambassador) for Global Issues).
B. Visit to the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) Headquarters on 19 October, involving a meeting with Mr Kouichi Miyazawa (JCG Commandant), which also included Mr Hideki Kinoshita (Chief Hydrographer of Japan / Director-General of the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of Japan (JHOD)).
C. Visit to The Nippon Foundation on 19 October, involving a meeting with Mr Mitsuyuki Unno (Executive Director of the Ocean Affairs Department).
D. Visit to the JHOD Headquarters on 20 October, involving an office tour and a meeting with junior officers.
E. Meeting with Dr Masayuki Fujita (President of the Japan Hydrographic Association (JHA)) and Mr Hideki Kinoshita on 23 October.

During the high-level meetings with the MOFA (Meeting A) and the JCG (Meeting B), both sides recognized the importance of the IHO's work, including the digital transformation in hydrography and capacity development initiatives. They also reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the cooperation between Japan and the IHO.

During the high-level meeting with The Nippon Foundation (Meeting C), the IHO Secretary-General expressed his sincere gratitude to The Nippon Foundation for its longstanding and generous support

of seabed mapping and capacity development initiatives, including the Seabed 2030 project, the GEBCO training programme, and the GEOMAC project. They also discussed future opportunities for further strengthening cooperation between The Nippon Foundation and the IHO.

During the office tour and meeting with JHOD's junior officers (Meeting D), the IHO Secretary-General connected with many young professionals and encouraged them to play a leading role in shaping the future of hydrography at the national, regional and global levels.

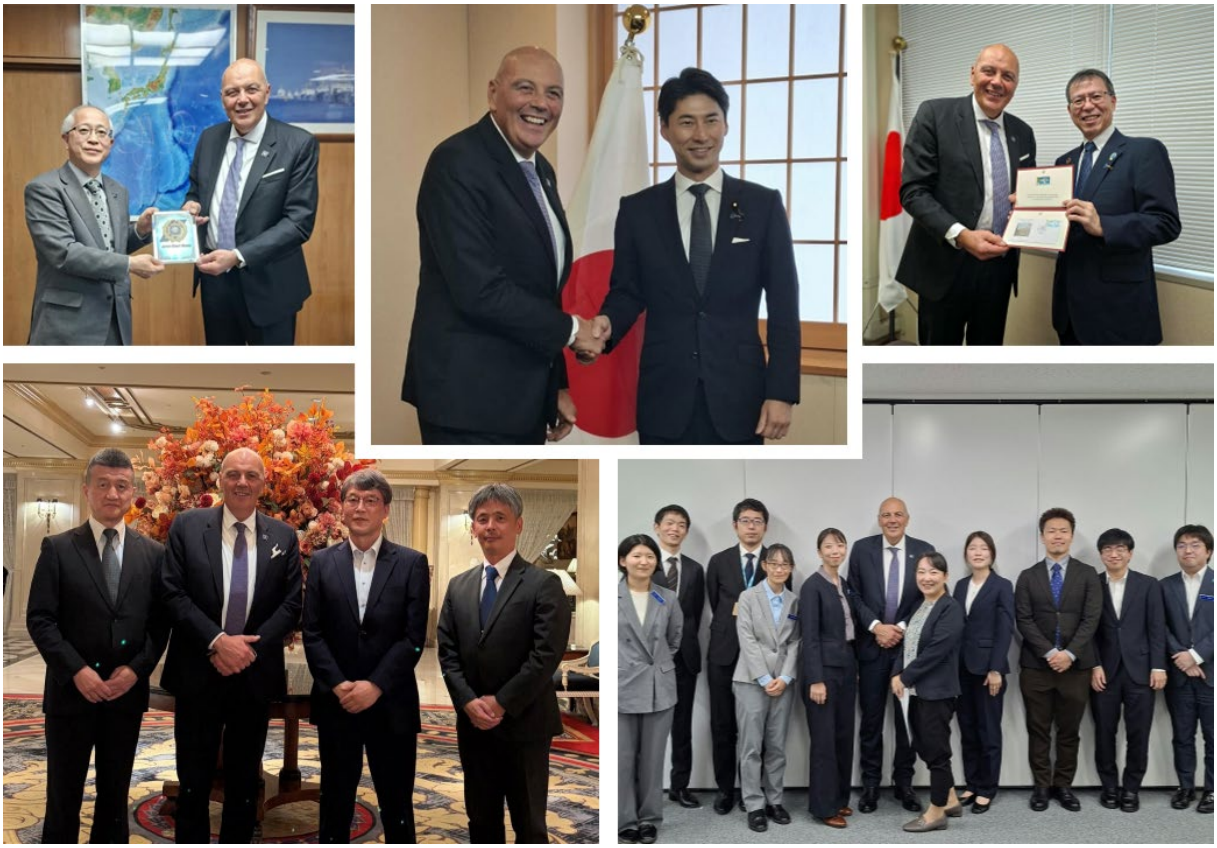


Photo 1 *Meetings with the JCG Commandant (top left), the State Minister for Foreign Affairs (top centre), the Director-General for Global Issues of the MOFA (top right), the Chief Hydrographer of Japan and the President of the JHA (bottom left), and JHOD junior officers (bottom right).*

In addition to the high-level and technical meetings, the IHO Secretary-General also undertook the following on-site visits at various locations across Japan during his visit:

A. Visit to the Osaka Wan Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Centre in Kobe City on 21 October.
B. Visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Cenotaph in Hiroshima City on 22 October.
C. Visit to the fieldwork site of the IBSC-recognized Category "B" training course for hydrographic surveyors (JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program "Hydrography for Charting and Disaster Management") in Beppu City on 23 October.
D. Tour of the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Museum of the JHOD in Tokyo on 24 October.

During the technical on-site visit to the Osaka Wan VTS Centre (Visit A), the Director, Mr Hiroshi Michitsuji, demonstrated to the IHO Secretary-General how the VTS Centre contributes to ensuring the safe navigation of vessels in Japan's busy shipping lanes.

During the visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (Visit B), the IHO Secretary-General was guided by the Director, Mr Yoshifumi Ishida. As a sign of respect, he laid a wreath at the Cenotaph to honour those who lost their lives in Hiroshima at the end of WWII..

During the technical on-site visit to the fieldwork site of the IBSC-recognized Category "B" training course for hydrographic surveyors at Beppu Port (Visit C), which has been jointly conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the JHOD since 1971, the IHO Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to the organisers of the training course from the JICA and the JHOD, as well

as the teaching staff from the Japan Hydrographic Association (JHA). He also encouraged the eight trainees from seven countries (Cambodia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Vanuatu, and Singapore) to contribute to the future development of hydrography through the sharing of their knowledge and skills and their international professional networks established during the course.



Photo 2 *On-site visits to the IBSC-recognized Category "B" training course for hydrographic surveyors conducted by the JICA and the JHOD (top left and right), the Osaka Wan VTS Centre (bottom left), and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Cenotaph (bottom centre and right).*

The official visit was highly productive and provided a valuable opportunity for the IHO Secretary-General to engage with a broad range of governmental, non-profit, and international cooperation partners involved in hydrography across Japan. Through the high-level and technical meetings, as well as the on-site visits conducted throughout the country, the IHO Secretary-General gained a deeper appreciation of Japan's longstanding technical contributions to hydrography, maritime safety, and capacity development. The visit further reinforced the strong and enduring partnership between Japan and the IHO and highlighted opportunities for future technical cooperation in support of the IHO's strategic objectives.