**ALUMNI SEMINAR WELCOME SPEECH BY IHO DIRECTOR IPTES**

Dear Mr Unno, Dear Mr Thai Low, Distinguished Guests, Dear Alumni, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very Good Morning, Ohaya Gozaymas,

It is a great honour for me, on behalf of the International Hydrographic Organization, to address you on the occasion of theIHO-Nippon Foundation Alumni Seminar which will take place from 29 to 31 October 2019, here in beautiful Singapore. It is a great feeling to meet here again after 3 years later from the First IHO-NF Alumni Workshop which was held successfully in Bangkok, in Thailand in 2016. So, we could say that this is the Second Alumni Seminar and we hope to organize the third event in the future with great enthusiasm.

First of all, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you all to attend this AS, in particular to our Keynote Speaker Mr Unno, the Executive Chairman of the NF. It is indeed a matter of unique opportunity and great honour for me to see you, Mr Unno, and all participants here in this event.

I thank our alumni and friends from around the world, who have made their effort to travel all the way to the Singapore. Your presence makes this event very meaningful to us. I also thank to organizers of this AS (namely to the IHO CB Team, Alberto, Nao and Sandrine) for their great efforts in the last couple of months. And also, we are a grateful to MPA of Singapore for their kind assistance to organize this seminar.

As you know, The CHART (Cartography, Hydrography and Related Training) Project, funded by the Nippon Foundation, provides training in marine cartography and data assessment which is recognized at the Category B level by the FIG-IHO-ICA International Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers. The course is hosted by the UKHO and composed of five modules, each module varying from two to five weeks in length. The current 11th course started on 2 September 2019 and will end on 13 December. At the end of this course, we will have 7 more new alumni.

To date, the IHO-NF CHART project and its forerunner, the Japan Capacity Building Project, have trained XX students from XX countries, almost all of whom (more than 90%) are now working in chart production, thereby contributing to achieving the IHO’s role and objectives. We expect that the current students that attend the present course at the UKHO will also follow the same path.

IHO gives great importance to the training activities all around the world. As IHO, we need highly trained, highly skilled cartographers for global maritime community. We recognize that CHART Project is one of the great examples of cooperation and internationally well recognized in cartographic training domain.

Taking this opportunity, on behalf of everyone here, and on behalf of the IHO Member states, I would like to thank the Nippon Foundation for their continuing and very generous support to the IHO CB programme. We believe that this great support will continue considering that this course has achieved a great success for the last 10 years. I also thank the UKHO that provides excellent, world class course and host nation support to the students.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear Alumni, this AS offers excellent opportunity to keep in touch with each other and to strengthen the alumni relationship and network, to encourage the cooperation among the fellows, to improve the global friendship and also to obtain feedback from the alumni.

I encourage all of you to participate actively to the discussions, provide us with your feedbacks and share your experience in order to review and improve the effectiveness of this great course. I wish you a very successful Seminar.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to renew our thanks to the Nippon Foundation for its substantial support of the IHO Capacity Building programme and we look forward to receiving contribution in the near future to continue this successful CHART project.

Thank you.