Good morning, everyone.

I’m happy to be here today with you all at the second Alumni Seminar of the IHO-Nippon Foundation CHART Project.

Firstly, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the IHO and especially to Mr. Mustafa Iptes, the IHO Director, for running the IHO-Nippon Foundation CHART Project for a decade. I would also like to thank the MPA and the Chief Hydrographer, Mr. Thai Low YING-HUANG for hosting this Alumni Seminar. Last but not least, a huge thanks to members of the UKHO for continuing to provide exceptional training to the fellows of the CHART Project.

Having welcomed the first group of fellows in 2009, 64 fellows from 39 countries have now successfully completed the program. I’m delighted to hear that more than two thirds of these alumni are gathered here today.

Now, I’m sure that after finishing the CHART program, the majority of you have returned to your own institutions and have been working hard to improve the charting quality and coverage in your countries. According to a paper submitted by the IHO Secretariat for the IHO Capacity Building sub-committee meeting in May this year, the charting coverage for alumni countries saw an average increase of 41 points. By comparison, the figure was significantly lower for non-alumni countries at an average increase of 17 points. This can be taken as an indicator for the positive impact the CHART project has had in facilitating the charting efforts across the world.

As I have mentioned at the beginning, today is the second time the Alumni Seminar for the CHART Project is being held since Bangkok. I hope this seminar will act as a catalyst to increase individual fellow’s abilities, form stronger networks and to encourage the birth of new projects through cooperation between fellows.

We are not holding this Seminar for the sake of drawing up a list of names. It is not that we want to have a gathering simply to make small talk once every few years.

You already have a tool to do something great amongst yourselves. That is to say, you share the experience of having gone through the same training program. Take advantage of the network you have. Take the initiative and seek ways to collaborate with each other.

Make use of this valuable occasion to interact with one another and seek ways in which you could contribute to solving a bigger problem the ocean faces today.

At the next Alumni Seminar, I want to hear all the great things you have been up to, not in your capacity in your country but as someone who is giving back to the world.

I look forward to seeing you again then.

Thank you.