

THIS CIRCULAR LETTER REQUIRES YOU TO VOTE

IHO File No. S1/1001

CIRCULAR LETTER 20/2025
11 April 2025

IHO RESOLUTION - MAXIMIZING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN IHO EVENTS
CALL FOR APPROVAL

References:

- A. 3rd IHO Assembly – Decision 21
- B. 7th IHO Council Meeting – Decision C7/40,
- C. IHO Circular Letter 28/2024 dated 19 June 2024 - *Increasing participation in activities of IHO bodies,*
- D. 8th IHO Council Meeting – Decision C8/62,
- E. Convention of the International Hydrographic Organization as amended by the Protocol dated 14 April 2005 that entered into force on 08 November 2016 – Article IX Section f.

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC) made a request to the 3rd Assembly in May 2023 that resulted in the following decision in Reference A:

The Assembly tasked the Council to discuss the request from the SWPHC for the provision of mechanisms to ensure greater inclusion and participation of all Member States at IHO meetings, in particular the IHO Assembly and come up with solutions as soon as possible.

2. In October 2023, the Council agreed (Reference B) to establish an ad hoc drafting group led by New Zealand to prepare an IHO Resolution based on the recommendations made by the Secretary-General and preliminary analysis from Australia, New Zealand & United Kingdom.

3. In October 2024, the Council endorsed (Reference D) the principles of the proposed IHO Resolution on *Maximizing Active Participation in IHO Events* submitted by the ad hoc drafting group. The Council also invited the group to complement the proposed resolution with a set of practical Guidelines derived from the outcome of the survey issued by IHO Circular Letter (Reference C) to assist IHO meeting hosts in its implementation.

4. The IHO Secretariat thanks the following Members States for their valuable contribution to the ad hoc drafting group: Australia, Chile, Fiji, New Zealand, Singapore, United Kingdom and United States of America.

5. Noting the excellent progress made by the ad hoc drafting group to prepare the associated guidelines, the consolidated IHO resolution is now submitted for approval as per reference E. Member States are now invited to cast their vote **no later than 30 May 2025** using any of the following methods:

- the IHO Online Form accessible through the following link (**recommended**):
https://IHO.formstack.com/forms/cl20_25
- the IHO Voting Form (see Annex B), to be sent back by email (cl-lc@iho.int).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mathias Jonas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Mathias JONAS
Secretary-General

Annex:

- A. Proposed IHO Resolution and associated guidelines
- B. Voting Form

MAXIMIZING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN IHO EVENTS	1/2025		
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Recalling decision A3/21 made at the 3rd Assembly and decision C7/39 made at the 7th Council, the IHO recognizes that technology enables multiple formats through which IHO events may be conducted.

Noting the need to engage all IHO Member States and interested Coastal States, it is **resolved** that the IHO will seek to achieve the maximum possible active participation at IHO events by leveraging technology, where appropriate.

Recognising that IHO events are typically hosted by IHO Member States, and that the capacity of host nations may differ, it is **recommended** that the bodies of the IHO use the most appropriate format for their events to maximise active participation, while taking into consideration the capacity of host nations and the preferences of expected participants.

It is further **recommended** that the IHO Secretariat conduct regular reviews of IHO Member State hosting capacity and participants' preferences to provide evidence to support bodies of the IHO in these decisions.

APPENDIX: PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR IHO MEETINGS

Meeting Modalities

The following meeting formats should be considered when organizing IHO meetings:

1. **In-person – a face-to-face** meeting held in a physical location.
2. **Hybrid with remote-passive participation** - a meeting held in a physical location, in-person, and where an audio-visual broadcast is live-streamed for remote participants to follow proceedings.
3. **Hybrid with remote-active participation** - a meeting held in a physical location, in-person, and where a platform is used to allow remote participants to actively participate.
4. **Remote** – a meeting held online only. All participants engage actively via the platform provided.

Key Principles for Determining Meeting Modalities

Hosts of meetings should, as far as practicable and within their capacity, include the use of technology to complement in-person meetings and maximize active participation in IHO events.

When announcing IHO meetings of all formats, it should be acknowledged that in-person attendance is requested for all principals¹ and that additional capabilities are intended to allow remote-passive / remote-active attendance.

Remote meetings should be considered in circumstances where in-person meetings cannot take place due to widespread travel restrictions or if the nature or content of the agenda does not justify the expense of having an in-person meeting (e.g. group discussions).

Registration

Regardless of the meeting format, participants must register their attendance through the IHO Portal. When registering for a hybrid meeting via the IHO Portal, attendees must select the relevant format to reflect their mode of participation.

Preparation

Hosts of meetings that provide remote passive/active participation should seek to conduct a connection test shortly before the meeting to allow connections to be checked, this avoids technical issues during meetings.

Recording

Meetings may be recorded. All groups need to give this consideration and must seek the permission of all participants, both in-person and remote.

Best Practice for Remote-Active Attendees

- Connect from a desktop computer or laptop,
- Avoid the use of hand-held devices or tablet computers,
- Seek to connect from a quiet, well-lit room and avoid large empty rooms which cause echo;
- Use a dedicated headset or microphone to ensure high-quality audio,
- Use a High-Definition webcam to offer high-quality video,
- State name and organization at the start of the meeting during the technical check when connected to the platform,
- Use the 'raise hand' function (or equivalent) of the platform to request the floor,
- When invited to speak by the Chair, enable audio and video, state name and organization, then make the intervention;
- When speaking ensure all other devices and notifications are muted to avoid distractions,
- As far as possible the use of the chat function should be minimized,
- Keep video on whenever possible,
- Keep audio muted when not speaking.

¹ Principals' a generic term for the key individuals or decision-makers who are present at a meeting, often representing different departments or areas of expertise within an organization and are expected to contribute significantly to the discussion and decision-making process.

Best Practice for Meeting Hosts

- The use of desktop microphones is preferred to ensure the smooth running of discussions,
- For passive streaming a single camera that pans to speakers is preferred,
- A dedicated laptop(s) and operator(s) should be available to display presentations and monitor the chat function,
- Always seek permission and inform participants if the meeting is to be recorded,
- Always conduct a technical check before the start of the meeting to resolve any technical issues,
- In-person attendees should be discouraged from connecting to the meeting platform to ensure optimum internet performance,
- Offer the use of the chat function for technical issues.

**INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION IN IHO MEETINGS
PROPOSED IHO RESOLUTION AND ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES
CALL FOR APPROVAL**

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VOTING FORM

to be returned to the IHO Secretariat **no later than 30 May 2025**

E-mail: cl-lc@iho.int

**Member
State:**

Contact:

E-mail:

1-Do you approve the draft IHO Resolution with its annexed practical guidelines?

YES

☐

NO

☐

Please provide any comments in the section below.