

**IHO File No. S1/1001**

**CIRCULAR LETTER 28/2025**  
**08 July 2025**

## **APPROVAL OF IHO RESOLUTION**

### **MAXIMIZING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN IHO EVENTS**

#### **References:**

- A. IHO CL 20/2025 dated 11 April 2025 – *IHO Resolution – Maximizing Active Participation in IHO Events – Call for Approval*
- B. 3<sup>rd</sup> IHO Assembly – Decision 21
- C. 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 Circular Letter in Reference A called for the approval of the proposed IHO Resolution – *Maximizing Active Participation in IHO Events* in application of Reference B.
2. The IHO Secretariat thanks the thirty-nine (38) Member States who responded to Reference A: Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.
3. The above-mentioned Member States unanimously supported the adoption of the proposed IHO Resolution. Ten (10) Member States submitted comments in addition to their vote. All comments received are provided in Annex A to this Circular Letter with responses from the Ad Hoc Drafting Group and IHO Secretariat. The resulting version of the resolution, taking into account the comments, is provided as Annex B.
4. When the Circular Letter in reference was issued, there were one hundred and one (101) Member States of the IHO with two (2) States suspended. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the IHO as amended (Reference C), the minimum number of affirmative votes required is thirty-four (34). As a result, the proposed IHO Resolution (as in Annex B) has been adopted and will be included into the IHO M-3 Publication accordingly.

5. In application of this IHO Resolution, please note that, from now on, meeting hosts should make use of technology to maximize active participation in IHO events, in addition to in-person attendance, as far as is practicable and within their capacity.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Mathias JONAS  
Secretary-General

Annex:

- A. IHO Member States' responses to IHO CL 20/2025 from the Ad Hoc Drafting Group and IHO Secretariat (in English only)
- B. IHO CL 20/2025 – IHO Resolution & associated guidelines (Final Version)

**IHO MEMBER STATES' COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO IHO CL 20/2025**

**AUSTRALIA** (Vote = YES)

Australia extends sincere thanks to the Ad Hoc drafting group, recognizing the leadership of Adam Greenland and the IHO Secretariat for progressing this important work. Using technology to increase engagement will strengthen the IHO, increasing diversity of thought and participation, working towards the IHO Strategic Plan.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks Australia for their comments.

**INDIA** (Vote = YES)

In the section "Best practice for remote - active attendees of Annex A to IHO CL 20/2025", option to "switch on live caption" can be suggested as a practice.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks India for their comment and have addressed which are now reflected in the final version of the Resolution (Annex B).

**INDONESIA** (Vote = YES)

To enhance the success of the event, it's important to improve communication and promotion by sharing information across multiple channels such as social media, official websites, and newsletters, and ensuring materials are translated for international participants. Hosting interactive workshops and seminars can increase engagement and provide opportunities for deeper learning and knowledge exchange. Leveraging digital platforms allows attendees to connect, share ideas, and stay involved before and after the event, especially those joining remotely. Collaborating with stakeholders, including other organizations and industry experts, can expand the event's reach and add valuable perspectives.

Gathering feedback after the event helps in understanding audience needs and improving future editions while showing that participant input is appreciated. Efforts should also be made to attract a diverse audience, including academics, professionals, and students, to create a more inclusive environment. Recognizing active participation through certificates, awards, or competitions can further motivate involvement. Finally, diversifying the themes and topics-especially those relevant to current global trends in hydrography-can help capture broader interest and ensure the event remains relevant and impactful.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks Indonesia for their comments.

**NETHERLANDS** (Vote = YES)

The list of Best Practices for Remote-Active attendees and Meeting Hosts should not be part of the Resolution or its Appendix. Their level of detail means that they are of a more dynamic nature. They should be managed in a way that allows for periodic updates.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks the Netherlands for their comments and will publish the PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR IHO MEETINGS as a separate document.

**NEW ZEALAND** (Vote = YES)

New Zealand extends sincere thanks to the Ad Hoc drafting group and the IHO Secretariat for progressing this important work. Leveraging technology to maximize participation will strengthen the IHO's collaborative framework and ensure all Member States can actively contribute to our shared mission.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks New Zealand for their comments.

**PHILIPPINES** (Vote = YES)

The Philippines supports granting meeting hosts the flexibility to adopt the proposed modalities that best promote the active participation of Member States while duly considering the host's capacity and capability to effectively accommodate participating nations. We support the move to finding means and ways to provide greater inclusion and participation of Member States considering each have their own different capacities and challenges.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks the Philippines for their comments.

**SOLOMON ISLANDS** (Vote = YES)

SOLOMON ISLANDS is in favor of this initiative and is voting in support for the approval and adoption of the PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR IHO MEETINGS.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks the Solomon Islands for their comments.

**SPAIN** (Vote = YES)

It is important to differentiate between face-to-face and non-face meetings.

With regard to face-to-face meetings, taking into account the large percentage of member countries whose mother language is Spanish/French/other language identified, the inclusion in these guidelines of the use of simultaneous translation facilities (English-Spanish-French), is a measure that would have a high impact on the achievement of the final objective pursued: Maximize active participation in IHO

events. These means of simultaneous translation should preferably be provided by professional staff. This measure of simultaneous translation is already used within the scope of other international organizations such as the IMO or the UN with excellent results.

As far as non-face-to-face meetings are concerned, they tend to have a low level of participation (even none at all) as the main language of use is often not the natural language of many of the participants. Nowadays, there are computer tools and applications that allow for acceptable simultaneous translation, which can overcome this language barrier and facilitate and promote the participation of more people.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks Spain for their comments and acknowledges the use of simultaneous translation facilities at face-to-face meetings would positively impact active participation in IHO events. Given the high cost of simultaneous translation resources, the IHO Secretariat limits its use to Assembly events. However, it is noted that advances in AI technology will likely be used in the near future.

**TONGA (Vote = YES)**

The Maritime Administration Office of Tonga wishes to express our full support to the Circular letter 20/2025 regarding maximizing active participation in IHO events.

We acknowledged the importance of the need to all IHO Member states shown in the Circular Letter 20/2025 ensuring the effective engagement of all IHO Member states in IHO events. Therefore, we encourage the IHO's effort to leverage technology to facilitate greater inclusivity and achieve the maximum possible active participation of Member States in IHO events.

With our geographic and resources constraints we encourage this flexible approaches of allowing the participants to participate actively in any modalities that is accessible.

The Maritime Administration Office of Tonga remains committed to increasing our involvement in IHO initiatives and will continue to participate in relevant events.

We support the ongoing efforts to identify and reduce the barriers of limiting the participation of Member States.

We therefore, continue to support the IHO's measures to create a more inclusive and effective international hydrographic community. Please take this letter and count it as our continued cooperation and support to the measures proposed in Circular Letter 20/2025.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks Tonga for their supportive letter..

**UNITED KINGDOM** (Vote = YES)

Page 4, Paragraph 1: Currently reads:

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

Suggested amendment below:

Where IHO meetings have an in-person element, it is expected and encouraged that the lead representatives from member states are present in person. The additional technological capabilities are intended to allow remote-passive / remote-active attendance for additional meeting attendees.

**Comment by the Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat:**

The Ad Hoc Drafting Group / IHO Secretariat thanks the United Kingdom for their suggested amendments which has been integrated in the final version of the Resolution (Annex B).

## IHO CL 20/2025 – IHO RESOLUTION &amp; ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES (FINAL VERSION)

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.

Where IHO meetings have an in-person element, it is expected that the lead representatives from Member States are present in person. The use of additional technological capabilities used for remote-passive/remote-active participation is intended for additional meeting attendees.

Remote meetings should be considered in circumstances where in-person meetings cannot take place due to wide-spread 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 which 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.
- Note the option to "switch on live caption"

### **Best Practice for Meeting Hosts**

- To facilitate inclusive and effective participation in IHO meetings, hosts are encouraged to provide appropriate IT equipment that supports both remote-passive and remote-active participation modes.
- Hosts of Meetings are invited to liaise with the relevant Office Bearers of the relevant IHO Body to discuss available technical means options prior to the meeting.
- The use of desktop microphones is preferred to ensure the smooth running of discussions,
- For passive streaming a single camera which 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,
- Hosts of meetings that provide remote passive/active participation should seek to conduct a connection test shortly before the meeting to allow the whole setup (cables, device, sound balance) to be checked, this avoids technical issues during meetings.
- 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.

### **Preparation**

- The table below outlines the recommended equipment and its applicability to each mode of participation.

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Remote-Passive</b>	<b>Remote-Active</b>
Dedicated laptop/computer (connected to display system)	Optional	Optional
Duplicate screen (Chair Team table)	Recommended	Recommended
Visio conference (camera + microphone)	Required	Required
Display screen (e.g. flat TV, video projector, with or without dedicated laptop)	Required	Required
Table Microphone (Chair Team table)	Required	Required
Table/Mobile Microphone (Attendees)	Required	Required
Audio Speakers (microphone feed)	Required	Required