



IHO File No. S1/1900/A

CIRCULAR LETTER 01/2026
06 January 2026

THEME FOR WORLD HYDROGRAPHY DAY 2026 AND MEDIA OUTREACH

References:

A: IHO CL 39/2025 dated 28 October - World Hydrography Day – Report on Member States activities in 2025 and the proposed theme for 2026

B: Summary Report of the 9th meeting of the IHO Council dated 14-16 October 2025

Dear Hydrographer,

1. As announced in the Reference A, the proposed theme "**Transforming how ocean data is shared**" for the celebration of World Hydrography Day for 2026 (WHD 2026) was put forward for Member States consideration and comments. The IHO Secretariat thanks Bangladesh, Colombia, Germany and Malaysia for their responses. Their comments are provided in the Annex to this letter.
2. The Secretariat has carefully considered the alternative proposals but has decided to maintain the proposed theme which was presented to the IHO 9th Council Meeting Reference B¹, Decision and Action C9/49).

"Transforming how ocean data is shared"

3. The proposed theme aims to address the planned uptake of S-100 based data services – with a focus on S-101 ENCs and S-102 Bathymetric Surface, which assist the IMO approved acceptance of S-100 ECDIS as regular means for navigation in international shipping. The motto will also help highlight the ongoing collaboration with other international bodies such IALA and WMO to incorporate their services into the S-100 ecosystem. Though there is evidently a clear focus on S-100 aspects, the use of the term S-100 is deliberately avoided to attract stakeholders outside the core community of hydrographers and navigation experts with a generic non-technical phrase.
4. The IHO Secretariat would like to create new videos highlighting these different aspects, including Member States' efforts as relate to S-100, namely: progress with implementation, gathering of S-100 data, sea trials etc. Member States are invited to share information regarding their work as well as photos and raw video footage to be included in the new videos to be created by the Secretariat by 15 May 2026. Member States wishing to be featured are invited to contact Sarah Jones Couture, Public Relations and Communication Officer, at prco@ihohq.int.

¹ Available on the IHO Portal: [list of decisions & actions](#)

5. In support of WHD 2026, the IHO Secretariat will share updates on the IHO Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube accounts. The IHO Secretariat will also organize a dedicated page on the IHO website, where papers and other materials relevant to the celebration will be posted. Member States are invited to forward to the Secretariat any materials that they may create in support of their national WHD 2026 celebrations for posting on any of these platforms.

6. The Secretariat takes this opportunity to thank all Member States who have already contributed through ideas, advice and materials to this important process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mathias JONAS".

Dr Mathias JONAS
Secretary-General

Annex : Comments from Member States

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM MEMBER STATES

BANGLADESH

Refer to your trial email. Bangladesh thanks the IHO Secretariat for circulating Circular Letter 39/2025 and for inviting Member States to comment on the proposed theme for World Hydrography Day (WHD) 2026.

We appreciate the intention behind the proposed theme “Transforming how ocean data is shared”, particularly its alignment with the ongoing transition toward S-100 based products and services and the broader goal of promoting wider accessibility and interoperability of ocean data.

After careful consideration, Bangladesh would like to propose a refined version of the theme that more explicitly reflects the sustainability dimension of ocean governance and the societal benefits of enhanced data-sharing practices. Accordingly, Bangladesh proposes the following alternative wording:

“Transforming how ocean data is shared for a sustainable future”

We believe this phrasing more clearly highlights the importance of modernizing ocean data exchange not only for technical advancement, but also for supporting global commitments to environmental stewardship, climate resilience, blue economy development, and the long-term sustainable use of the oceans.

Bangladesh remains committed to actively supporting IHO initiatives and stand ready to contribute to the effective observance of WHD 2026.

COLOMBIA

With reference to the proposed theme for World Hydrography Day – 2026, “Transforming the way ocean data is shared,” the General Maritime Directorate, as the body responsible for the Colombian Hydrographic Service, expresses its approval of the proposed theme.

This theme is particularly relevant, as it highlights the importance of advancing the adoption of S-100-based services and strengthening collaboration with international organizations to ensure the effective use of hydrographic data for the benefit of global maritime navigation.

I take this opportunity to reiterate my respect and appreciation, and the General Maritime Directorate's commitment to service.

GERMANY

As indicated during the Council session, Germany supports the proposed theme for 2026 “Transforming how ocean data is shared”. However, in official publications the term “data” should be used in plural. The singular version is “datum”. Marriam-Websters states that the plural construction is more common in print <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/data>. Cambridge Dictionary states that although being officially plural, the term “data” is now often used as an uncount noun with a singular verb. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/data> the proposed theme “Transforming how ocean data is shared” is using the present simple+passive construction for the verb. That is more than a singular verb.

In conclusion, and in consideration of the Dictionaries advice, we suggest to amend the wording to "Transforming how ocean data are shared." Alternatively, the theme "Transforming ocean data exchange" could be used to address exactly the same meaning.

We would like to invite you to consider the provided input and to act appropriately.

MALAYSIA

Malaysia has reviewed the proposed theme for World Hydrography Day 2026, "Transforming how ocean data is shared", and expresses its strong support for its adoption. The proposed theme is both timely and relevant, as it aligns with the global transition toward modern, accessible, and interoperable ocean data - particularly in light of the ongoing implementation of the S-100 framework and the introduction of S-100 based products such as S-101 ENCs and S-102 bathymetric surfaces.

Malaysia concurs that the theme will help foster deeper and broader collaboration with key international partners, including the IHO, IALA, and WMO, while promoting broader utilisation of marine geospatial information for navigation, safety, environmental management, and societal benefit. In support of this initiative, Malaysia will also undertake appropriate national-level activities to promote and commemorate WHD 2026.