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CIRCULAR LETTER 48/2026
1 September 2026

SECRETARY-GENERAL AND DIRECTORS ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

References:

- A. Convention on the International Hydrographic Organization and General Regulations of the IHO, as contained in IHO Publication M-1 - Basic Documents.
- B. Assembly Circular Letter 19/2026 - Results of the election for the posts of IHO Secretary-General and Director.
- C. Decisions of the 4th Session of the IHO Assembly, including Decisions 6-11, 16, 19-21, 32, 34 and 35.
- D. IHO Strategic Plan 2027-2032 and IHO Work Programme 2027-2029.
- E. Circular Letter 46/2025 on the Joint Project Team on potential HSSC/IRCC restructuring.
- F. Circular Letter 28/2023 - Responsibilities of the Secretary-General and Directors.

Dear Hydrographer,

1. At the 4th Session of the IHO Assembly and as communicated in Reference B, Rear Admiral Luigi Sinapi was elected IHO Secretary-General for a term of three years and Mr Adam Greenland to the post of IHO Director for a term of six years commencing on 1 September 2026. This Circular Letter informs Member States of the allocation of responsibilities between the Secretary-General and Directors of the IHO for the period 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2029.
2. The allocation is established in accordance with the Convention and the General Regulations of the IHO in reference A. The Secretary-General is the Head of the Secretariat and is responsible for its efficient operations. The two Directors report to the Secretary-General and carry out the responsibilities assigned by the Secretary-General. Routine management and decision-making will continue to be coordinated through the Secretary-General and Directors.
3. This allocation supports the implementation of the IHO Strategic Plan 2027-2032 and the IHO Work Programme 2027-2029 in reference D. It also reflects the operational requirements arising from the establishment of the IHO Infrastructure Centre in Busan and the GEBCO Secretariat in Monaco. This Circular Letter supersedes Circular Letter 28/2023 in reference F with effect from 1 September 2026

4. The present allocation does not modify the institutional structure, Terms of Reference or Rules of Procedure of HSSC, IRCC, the Regional Hydrographic Commissions or the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica. It also does not prejudice the work of the Joint Project Team on potential HSSC/IRCC restructuring established by Circular Letter 46/2025 in reference E. Any future decision by the Council or Member States on structural reform will be reflected as appropriate.

Responsibilities retained by the Secretary-General

5. The Secretary-General retains responsibility for the institutional leadership, strategic direction and high-level external representation of the Organization. This includes relations with Member States, prospective Member States, the Government of Monaco, diplomatic interlocutors, and the principal international and intergovernmental organizations and forums relevant to hydrography, nautical charting, marine geospatial information, ocean mapping, safety of navigation, e-navigation and ocean governance.

6. The Secretary-General retains overall responsibility for governance and policy matters, including preparation of the Assembly, Council and Finance Committee; strategic direction for the Work Programme, Budget, Strategic Plan implementation and Strategic Performance Indicator reporting; institutional communications; high-level membership enlargement; high-level RENC relations; and overall authority for finance, IHO Secretariat staff, travel priorities, organizational arrangements and Secretariat procedures.

7. High-level engagement with the United Nations system and related bodies, including DOALOS, UN-GGIM at plenary level, IOC-UNESCO, IMO, WMO, ISA and relevant UN Ocean Conference and Ocean Decade processes, as well as with IALA and other international, intergovernmental or partner organizations, remains under the authority of the Secretary-General.

8. For Secretariat attendance, preparation, follow-up and reporting in relation to Regional Hydrographic Commissions and the HCA - Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica, the Secretary-General retains direct responsibility for:

- ARHC - Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission
- EAHC - East Asia Hydrographic Commission
- MACHC - Meso American and Caribbean Sea Hydrographic Commission
- USCHC - US/Canada Hydrographic Commission
- SWAtHC - South West Atlantic Hydrographic Commission

Responsibilities assigned to the Directors.

9. Within their assigned portfolios, the Directors are responsible for ensuring the technical, operational and working-level engagement of the IHO Secretariat with those organizations, including participation in relevant committees, sub-committees, working groups, technical panels, Council-level meetings and, where appropriate, assemblies or plenary sessions. In doing so, the Directors shall promote continuity, technical credibility and effective follow-up of IHO positions, in accordance with the strategic direction, institutional messaging and priorities set by the Secretary-General. Matters involving high-level representation, institutional policy positions, new commitments, agreements, financial implications or political sensitivity shall be coordinated with, and where necessary decided by, the Secretary-General.

Responsibilities assigned to the Director (Dr. John Nyberg) - Technical Programme and Infrastructure (DTech)

10. DTech is assigned the technical, standards, digital and infrastructure portfolio. This includes Secretariat support to HSSC and its subordinate bodies, including S-100WG, ENCWG, NCWG, NIPWG, DQWG, TWCWG, HDCG, HSWG, MASS PT, S-130 PT and related technical project teams, except where specific cross-assignments are agreed by the Secretary-General.

11. DTech is responsible for the S-100 implementation ecosystem, including the S-100 Roadmap, S-101 transition, relevant framework standards, S-100 data protection and security issues, the GI Registry, test and sea-trial activities, and technical engagement related to IMO processes within the assigned technical portfolio.

12. DTech assumes primary responsibility for the establishment, operation and integration of the IHO Infrastructure Centre in Busan, in close cooperation with the Republic of Korea/KHOA, and for the IHO-Singapore Innovation and Technology Laboratory. DTech will maintain operational and technical RENC liaison and will also retain responsibility for UN-GGIM and JWG-MGI/MSDI, in close coordination with DCoord where required.

13. For Secretariat attendance, preparation, follow-up and reporting in relation to Regional Hydrographic Commissions, DTech is assigned responsibility for:

- EAtHC - Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission
- SAIHC - Southern Africa and Islands Hydrographic Commission
- MBSHC - Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission
- BSHC - Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission
- RSAHC - ROPME Sea Area Hydrographic Commission

Responsibilities assigned to the Director (Mr. Adam Greenland) - Inter-Regional Coordination, Capacity Development and GEBCO (DCoord)

14. DCoord is assigned the inter-regional coordination, capacity development, ocean mapping and GEBCO portfolio. This includes Secretariat support to IRCC and its subordinate bodies, including RHC coordination, CDSC, WWNWS-SC, WENDWG, IBSC, CSBWG, DCDB, IENWG and GEBCO-related bodies..

15. DCoord leads the Capacity Development portfolio, including the Capacity Development Work Programme, CD Fund coordination, Empowering Women in Hydrography, e-learning, country profiles, technical visits, training, recognized programmes and coordination with donors and RENC contributions.

16. DCoord assumes primary responsibility for the GEBCO Secretariat in Monaco, coordinating with the GEBCO Guiding Committee, IOC, the Government of Monaco, the Sponsors Board, DCDB, SCUFN, TSCOM, SCRUM and related GEBCO structures. DCoord also retains responsibility for ABLOS as a legal, policy and diplomatic cross-cutting body, with technical input from DTech where required.

17. For Secretariat attendance, preparation, follow-up and reporting in relation to Regional Hydrographic Commissions, DCoord is assigned responsibility for:

- SWPHC - South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission
- NHC - Nordic Hydrographic Commission
- NSHC - North Sea Hydrographic Commission
- NIOHC - North Indian Ocean Hydrographic Commission
- SEPRHC - South East Pacific Regional Hydrographic Commission

Regional representation and future adjustments

18. The allocation of RHC responsibilities is an internal Secretariat arrangement for attendance, preparation, follow-up and reporting. It does not affect the autonomy of RHCs, nor the observer status of the IHO Secretariat in RHCs.

19. The above allocation may be reviewed when required by operational needs, by Council or Member State decisions, or by future developments concerning HSSC/IRCC restructuring. The responsibilities will be reflected in the IHO Annual Report.

Yours sincerely,



Rear Admiral Luigi SINAPI
Secretary-General