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CIRCULAR LETTER 56/2026

21 October 2026

WORLD HYDROGRAPHY DAY
REPORT ON MEMBER STATES ACTIVITIES IN 2026

PROPOSED THEME AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2027

References:

A. IHO CL 01/2026 dated 6th January - *Theme for WHD 2026 and Media Outreach*
B. Decision C10/58 of the 10th meeting of the IHO Council, Monaco, 13-15 October 2026

Dear Hydrographer,

1. As announced in Reference A, the theme of World Hydrography Day (WHD) 2026 was

"Transforming how ocean data is shared"

2. This theme aimed to address the planned uptake of S-100 based data services which assist the IMO approved acceptance of S-100 ECDIS as regular means for navigation in international shipping. The motto also aimed to highlight the ongoing collaboration with other international bodies such as IALA and WMO to incorporate their services into the S-100 ecosystem.

3. National events in connection with World Hydrography Day 2026, as reported by Member States, are available at: https://iho.int/en/whd-2026-celebrations-around-the-world.

4. At the 10th IHO Council meeting in Monaco, from 13 to 15 October 2026, the Secretary-General proposed the following theme for WHD 2027:

"Hydrography – a skilled workforce, powering efficient data-driven navigation"

5. Digital hydrographic services are becoming central to safe, efficient maritime navigation. The proposed theme aims to convey the message that the digital transformation needed to deliver these services is not driven by technology alone; it depends on the capacity to turn standards and data into operational services. This theme places particular emphasis on skilled people, operational capability and global hydrographic capacity.

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6. The IHO Council endorsed this proposal and instructed the IHO Secretariat to circulate the theme to IHO Member States by IHO Circular Letter (Reference B).

7. Member States are requested to note the endorsement of the IHO Council, consider the proposed theme for WHD 2027 and provide their comments, if any, to the IHO Secretariat **no later than 10 December 2026**.

8. For 2027, the IHO Secretariat is proposing a new format for the World Hydrography Day celebration, featuring two events to be held live online. These will take place at two different times on the same day to accommodate a wider range of time zones. The events are planned for 21 June 2027: one at 09:00 CEST (Monaco time), potentially with a contribution from the IHO Infrastructure Centre; and another at 17:00 CEST (Monaco time), potentially with a contribution from the GEBCO Secretariat.

9. Member States are invited to plan national WHD activities and, where possible, connect to the global online WHD celebration events. Further details of these events will be provided when the Circular Letter containing the approved theme for WHD 2027 is circulated.

Yours sincerely,



Rear Admiral Luigi SINAPI
Secretary-General