



IHO Input to Part I of the Report of the UN Secretary General on Oceans and Law of the Sea

This contribution is provided in response to letter *LOS/SGR/2015* dated 10 December 2014 as the input from the International Hydrographic Organization to Part I of the report of the UN Secretary General on Oceans and Law of the Sea. It addresses the topic of the sixteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process: “Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic”.

Executive Summary

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is the inter-governmental organization whose principal aim is to ensure that all the world’s seas, oceans and navigable waters are surveyed and charted. The current membership of the IHO stands at 82 Member States with 7 other States in the process of joining the Organization.

Although safety of navigation remains a major driver for the IHO, hydrographic products and services are meant to support all activities which take place on, in or under the sea. Hydrography is inherent to the three dimensions of the sustainable development of the oceans and the IHO is therefore one of the important actors underpinning the sustainable development of the oceans.

The activities of the IHO in 2014 which addressed specifically the sustainable development of the oceans concerned four areas: developing standards, guidance, products and services; building capacities;

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provide guidance in order to ensure maximum international standardization of the technical aspects of UNCLOS. The Manual can be downloaded from the IHO website¹.

8. There are three main product types under the aegis of the IHO which supports the sustainable development of the oceans:

- nautical charts, issued on paper or in digital format (Electronic Navigational Charts), which are produced by national Hydrographic Offices to support safe navigation in accordance with the requirements of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS);
- the maritime component of spatial data infrastructures being developed at the national and regional levels, which includes in particular high resolution bathymetry (depth data) compiled by national Hydrographic Offices;
- the global reference bathymetric data sets developed and made available through the GEBCO project (General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans) operated jointly by the IHO and the UN's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

9. The IHO continues to encourage and support its Member States to achieve an adequate coverage of nautical charts and contribute to the development of maritime spatial data infrastructures. To assist in prioritizing charting improvements and resource allocation, the IHO is promoting the use of risk assessment methodology.

10. The current worldwide coverage of Elece current

Raising awareness on the role of hydrography

14. The theme of the World Hydrography Day (WHD) 2014 was “Hydrography - much more than just

services and are Members of the IHO. Additionally, many of the national hydrographic authorities represented in the IHO are reporting that government-sponsored surveying activity is now decreasing because of financial pressures.

22. The theme for the celebration of World Hydrography Day 2015 (WHD-2015) - "Our seas and waterways -