

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

This contribution is provided in response to your letter dated 6 May 2019 as the input from the International Hydrographic Organization to the report of the UN Secretary General on Oceans and Law of the Sea. It addresses developments and issues relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including the implementation of resolution A/RES/73/124.

Executive Summary

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is the inter-governmental international organization , seas and navigable waters are properly surveyed

8. The IHO is also developing and maintaining guidelines to assist stakeholders in implementing the requirement of international instruments such as UNCLOS and SOLAS. An example is the Manual on Technical Aspects of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (TALOS Manual - IHO Publication C-51). The TALOS Manual is maintained jointly by the IHO and the International Association of Geodesy (IAG). Its purpose is to provide guidance in order to ensure maximum international standardization of the technical aspects of UNCLOS. The Manual can be downloaded free of charge from the IHO website at www.iho.int.

9. IHO standards and guidelines intended to assist coastal States meet their obligations and requirements fall under three main themes:

- 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 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 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

11. The current worldwide coverage of Electronic Navigational Charts is now effectively corresponding with paper chart coverage. However numerous areas remote from the highly frequented shipping routes are still not sufficiently covered by modern up to date charted nautical information. Further progress is hindered by the lack of reliable survey data and the allocation of appropriate resources and priority by the governments of many coastal States.

Raising awareness on the role of hydrography

15. The theme for the celebration of World Hydrography Day 2018 (WHD-2018) - Bathymetry - the Foundation for Sustainable Seas, Oceans and Waterways - was intended to focus attention on the current lack of comprehensive data to underpin many maps and charts of the seas and oceans. The theme also promotes and encourages innovative supplementary data gathering and data maximizing initiatives already under investigation in the IHO, including crowdsourced bathymetry (volunteered geographic data) and satellite derived bathymetry. This, in turn, will help to promote the incre

