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<p>CIRCULAR LETTER 56/2002 20 November 2002</p>

**STATEMENT BY THE
INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION
TO THE
WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, Johannesburg, RSA
28th August 2002**

Reference: XVI IH Conference Decision N°9

Dear Hydrographer,

As approved by the XVIth International Hydrographic Conference which was held in Monaco in April 2002, a statement by the IHO was delivered at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa on the 28th August 2002.

Please find attached this statement which was delivered on behalf of the IHO, by Rear Admiral Neil GUY, former IHB Director.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

(original signed)

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Encl: IHO Statement

**STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION (IHO)
TO
THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, Johannesburg, RSA
DELIVERED BY
REAR ADMIRAL Neil GUY, DIRECTOR
INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC BUREAU (IHB) MONACO**

28TH AUGUST 2002

Mr President, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates it is an honour as a Director of the International Hydrographic Bureau to present the following statement on behalf of our Member States.

The IHO was founded in 1921 to contribute to and to promote maritime safety by assisting Member States, now numbering 72, to meet their obligations to safe navigation. This is clearly defined in the Amended Chapter V of the IMO Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) which includes the requirements for:

- the completion of modern surveys,
- the prompt promulgation of warnings and dangers,
- the publication of official charts and other navigational documents,

all in the interest of “ Safer Ships- Cleaner Seas” and improved trade for all nations.

In 1993, in publication ST/TCD/19, the UN noted the deficiencies in some national hydrographic organizations and in safety information capabilities in many regions of the world. The consequences are shown in the number of shipwrecks in areas poorly surveyed and which have led to loss of life and property and serious damage to sensitive habitats and trade. More recently (November 1998) the UN Assembly, in its Resolution 53/32 invited States to co-operate in carrying out hydrographic surveys and in providing maritime safety information services. The IMO approved an amended Chapter V of SOLAS, which entered into force on 1 July 2002, and which contains for the first time direct references to hydrographic requirements. Regulation 9 of Chapter V introduces the obligation to the more than 140 States party to SOLAS to provide such services and is even more explicit than UN Resolution 53/32. Reference is made in SOLAS to the Resolutions and Recommendations of the International Hydrographic Organization.

Nowadays there is a growing recognition of the value of hydrographic data in applications related to coastal management and environmental safety. These data, including accurate and up to date shoreline information, near and offshore bathymetry, and real-time tidal and current information, have the potential to significantly enhance the planning and execution of development projects, the determination of marine boundaries, the characterization of coastal habitats, and many other critical activities in the coastal zone.

It is not generally appreciated that, with few exceptions, more than 90% of a nation's trade is through its ports and if a developing State is to participate in the world markets and progress it has to ensure that its products reach the markets safely and on time. Increased insurance costs and the inferior vessels, that are prepared to take the risks inherent in areas of poor charting, will hardly assist a State to compete on the global markets and achieve sustainable growth.

The need for hydrographic and related data is not yet widely appreciated and many coastal areas,

such as in Africa, the Black Sea, Central America, the South China Sea, the Malacca Straits, the Caribbean Sea, Antarctica and other areas around the world, are not adequately covered by accurate hydrographic data. The data is vital to ensure safe navigation and for the studies needed for the protection of the environment.

In closing, Mr. President, the XVIth International Hydrographic Conference, held in April this year, puts forward

“A request to the Summit to reaffirm the importance of coordinated regional and national hydrographic efforts under the aegis of the IHO.”

Not only will the resultant data help to ensure the safe navigation of all vessels and the protection of the environment; it will contribute substantially and significantly to the sustainable development of all nations.