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CIRCULAR LETTER 75/2011
30 November 2011

**PARTICIPATION OF HIGH STANDING NATIONAL OFFICIALS IN THE INTERNATIONAL
HYDROGRAPHIC CONFERENCES**

Dear Hydrographer,

1 The International Hydrographic Conference (IHC) is the central event of the Organization, where the recent and future activities of the Organization and the issues of strategic importance are presented, discussed and decisions taken. The opening ceremony of the IHC, in the presence of HSH Prince Albert II, the Prime Minister and Ministers of the Government of Monaco, diplomats and other dignitaries, is an event that raises awareness of the Organization and the role of its Member States at the national and international level through the participation of senior officials and dignitaries, which in turn, provides further publicity on the importance of hydrography and the work and activities of the Organization. In the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other International Organizations, such as the WMO, it is a standing practice for high standing national officials from Member States, such as Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Secretaries-General, Chiefs of Navies, et cetera, to be present in the opening ceremonies of each Assembly. These senior participants are given the opportunity to address the Assembly by highlighting the importance and support that their countries provide to each Organization and often to highlight their country's achievements and activities in relation to the Organization.

2 In relation to the IHC, the participation of such high standing national officials from Member States in the opening ceremony would provide a number of benefits, including:

- a. increasing the visibility of the Organization within each Member State, and in other International Organizations, NGOs, and non-Member States;
- b. raising awareness of the importance of hydrography;
- c. delivering a clear message of recognition at national, regional and international levels of the work of the Organization on issues concerning safety at sea, protection and preservation of the marine environment, development and security; and
- d. providing further arguments for other States to join the IHO.

3 Member States are requested to provide their comments and views regarding whether high standing national officials should be invited to participate in the Opening Ceremony of IHCs as indicated in paragraph 2; and to inform the Bureau whether such participation is feasible during the next IHC in April 2012. For those Member States indicating a positive response, Member States are requested to provide details of which high standing national officials might participate from their country in order for the Directing Committee to prepare the opening ceremony and provide adequate time for them to address the Conference.

4 Responses from Member States are requested **before 15 January 2012**:

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President