

#### 44 The International Hydrographic Organization

The International Hydrographic Bureau was established as a result of international conferences which had the following objectives:

*To consider the advisability of all maritime nations adopting similar methods in the preparation, construction and production of their charts and hydrographic publications; of rendering the results in the most convenient form to enable them to be readily used; of instituting a prompt system of mutual exchange of hydrographic information between all countries and of providing an opportunity for consultations and discussions to be carried out on hydrographic subjects generally, by the hydrographic experts of the world.*

While specific statutes now clearly state the objectives of the Bureau, the objective of the early conferences still generally applies.

Four international conferences were held. The first of these was the International Marine Conference (Washington, 1889); the second and third were the International Congress of Navigation (St. Petersburg, 1908 and 1912); and the fourth was the First International Hydrographic Conference, sponsored by Great Britain and France, held at London in 1919.

The Bureau began its activities in 1921 with nineteen Member countries. Over the years, this membership has increased and eighty-one nations are now Member Governments.

The Principality of Monaco was selected as the seat of the Bureau, partly because of its central position, but largely because of the generous offer of Prince Albert I of Monaco - who was deeply interested in Oceanography - to provide accommodation for the Bureau in his Principality. The reigning Prince Albert II has graciously extended the use of this accommodation indefinitely.

The administration of the Bureau is carried out by a Committee of three Directors, each of a different nationality, who are elected to serve for a period of five years. The present directors are Robert Ward (Australia) (President), Mustafa Iptes (Turkey) and Gilles Bessero (France).

The Bureau is a non-political international organization working solely for the good of seafarers of all nations. It enforces no rules or regulations, but rather sets forth Hydrographic Standards as they are agreed upon by the Member Governments. Thus, it is hoped to obtain uniformity, as far as possible, in the charts and hydrographic publications produced by the world's hydrographic offices.

In order that this work may be reviewed and developed, regular conferences are held at 5 year intervals. These are attended by delegates from each Member Government together with observers from international scientific organizations and non-members.

At the 9th International Hydrographic Conference at Monaco in May 1967, a Convention was adopted with the aim of establishing the Bureau as an inter-governmental organization. This Convention came into force on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1970, from which date the new title of International Hydrographic Organization came into effect. The title International Hydrographic Bureau now only refers to the administrative headquarters at Monaco. The next International Hydrographic Conference will take place in 2017 in Monaco.

Visit the International Hydrographic Organization's website at <http://www.iho.int/>

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