

INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION
11th EAtHC-CHAtO MEETING
ACCRA, GHANA 24-26 November 2010

WELCOME CEREMONY - OPENING REMARKS
by Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA, IHB Director

Mr. Mike HAMMAH, Honorable Minister of Transport of the Republic of Ghana

Mr. Alock ASAMOAH, Rector of the Regional Maritime University

Commodore Gunda INUSA, Chairman of the Eastern Atlantic

Hydrographic Commission

EAtHC Member States Representatives

Associate Members and Observers

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour for me, on behalf of the International Hydrographic Bureau, to address a few words on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the XIth Conference of the East Atlantic Hydrographic Commission.

The International Hydrographic Organization gives great importance to the work of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions and the IHB Directors have under their responsibilities, the task to facilitate and provide support to the Commissions aiming at implementing the decisions agreed at their Conferences.

The IHO has 15 RHCs. The last one to be established is the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission, which had its first meeting last month. All have been established: to promote technical cooperation in the domain of hydrographic surveying, marine cartography and nautical information; to stimulate countries in the region to establish and strengthen their hydrographic capabilities and to facilitate the exchange of information. Therefore its spirit is absolutely of a technical, cooperative and collaborative nature.

As you can imagine the 15 RHCs have different challenges and priorities. It is a fact that after analyzing the status of hydrography, nautical cartography and marine safety information, we conclude that the Eastern Atlantic Hydrographic Commission is one of the RHCs which requires a strong improvement. This Conference shall be seen as an excellent opportunity to work with a regional team spirit aiming at strengthening the information, product and services provision to the mariner.

The IHO has made substantial efforts to motivate both, governmental authorities and maritime and port authorities on the transcendental role hydrography and its related disciplines play in national sustainable development. The maritime transport sector, the fishing industry, the tourism activities, the maritime delimitation issues, defense, coastal zone management, ports, just to mention a few areas, all of great socio-economic significance, cannot be effective and efficiently developed if reliable and updated hydrographic information is not available. There is not one activity that takes place in the sea that do not benefit from hydrography.

The IHO expects that within this region, and particularly within the countries not yet having established a HO, its authorities as well as the whole society become aware and strongly committed to recognize the important role hydrography plays in national development. Hydrography must be considered a national objective and should receive the widest support from national governments.

This Conference offers the opportunity to assess the regional situation and to identify the key priorities. The IHB is particularly interested in learning about the agreements you will reach at this Conference. Mr Chairman and Members of the Commission we wish you a successful conference.

Finally I would like to highlight the presence of one of the highest government authorities of Ghana, Mr. Mike HAMMAH, Honorable Minister of Transport of the Republic of Ghana at this opening ceremony. This is a clear indication of the commitment the Government of Ghana has with regard to hydrography as a national strategic objective.

Excellency, please accept our deep thanks to the Government of Ghana for hosting this Conference and particularly we thank you for being with us this evening. Your presence is certainly very motivating and encouraging. We are confident on your sustainable and strong support to Ghana's hydrographic development.

Finally we would like to thank particularly the Regional Maritime University for its strong willingness and enthusiasm to organize this event, to the Ghana Maritime Authority and to all those that have been involved in the detailed preparation of this Conference. To all many thanks.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Thank you very much.