

World Hydrography Day 2022

## **Hydrographic services' contribution to UN Ocean Decade**

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World Hydrography Day (WHD) is celebrated on June 21 of each year to commemorate the establishment of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). Basically, it is designed to raise awareness among the mass people about hydrography and to give ideas on how it plays a role in improving knowledge of the seas and oceans.

This year's World Hydrography Day theme is: "Hydrography - Contributing to the United Nations Ocean Decade". The theme is intended to highlight the relevant contribution of hydrography as a discipline of applied sciences to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021- 2030) in short 'Ocean Decade'.

The suggested theme offers the opportunity to emphasize the ability of hydrographers to gather and manage marine data and their strengths in technical collaboration on a global scale. It also underlines the strategic evolution of national, inter-regional and global activities to support an expanding group of stakeholders with hydrographic information and services.

I believe that the celebration of WHD will contribute to building awareness among different maritime communities and stakeholders of the country and will undoubtedly give a platform to meet our future maritime challenges.

A review of history shows that during the late 19th century, the hydrographer and oceanographer community around the world felt to establish a permanent commission to oversee the hydrographic activities, especially to adopt a similar method in charting services.

In 1919, the hydrographers of Great Britain and France cooperated in taking the necessary steps to convene an International Conference of Hydrographers in London, which was attended by 24 nations. Subsequently, a permanent organization named International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB) was formed, and statutes for its operations were prepared. Thus, on 21 June 1921, it was formally founded.

Almost every coastal state has developed National Hydrographic Services considering the importance of hydrographic services. There is also a national obligation under the UN Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) to ensure appropriate national hydrographic and charting services.

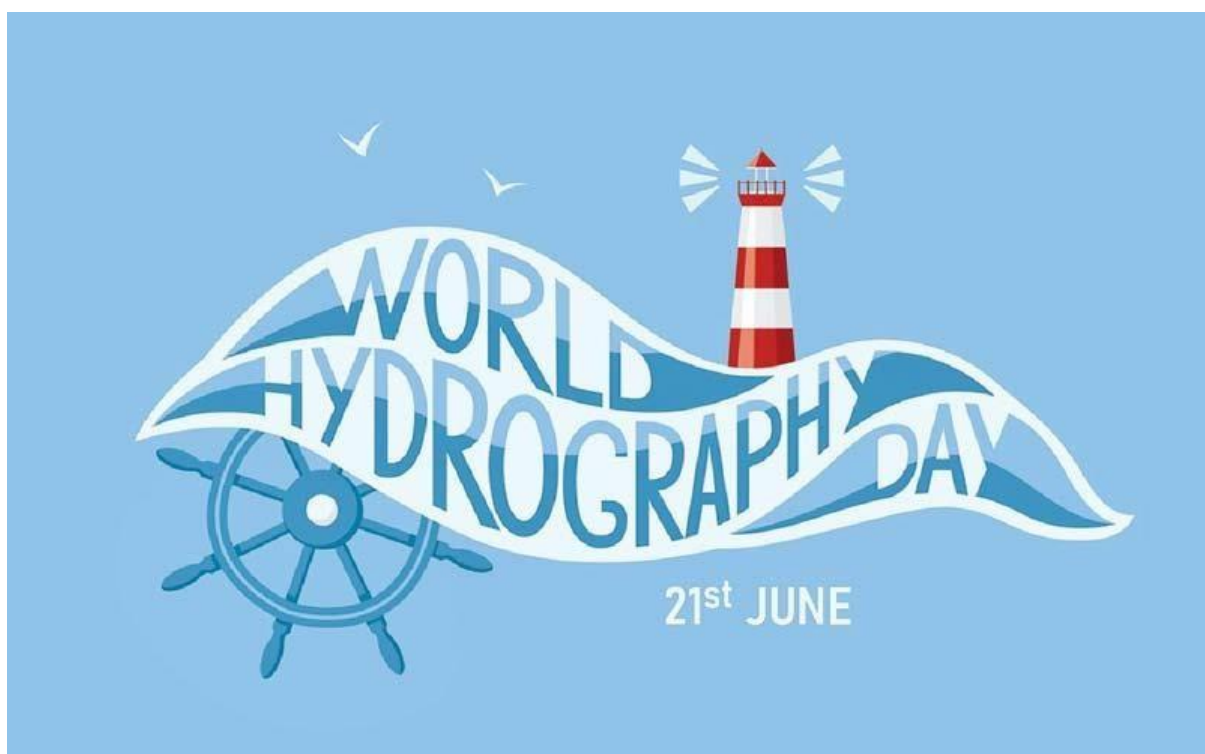
To fulfill such an obligation, Bangladesh Navy Hydrographic Services was formed in 1983 and has made steady progress to its present position as a professional national surveying and charting authority. In the same year, the government vested the responsibility for the hydrographic survey and navigational charting of its coastal and offshore waters to Bangladesh Navy.

Government also delegated the responsibility of charting and survey to BIWTA for the inland waters of the country. Bangladesh Navy is fully committed to this national responsibility and seeks excellence in delivering quality hydrographic services to ensure safe navigation for mariners.

With the focus of the Bangladesh government on the Blue Economy, we need a lot of skilled and educated personnel in Hydrography and Oceanography.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Navy Hydrographic and Oceanographic Centre (BNHOC) can produce international standard nautical charts with strict adherence to the IHO standards.

Bangladesh Navy has published all the required paper charts and Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) for its sea area. These are accepted by the national & international marine communities and widely distributed worldwide to ensure safe navigation.



The United Nations has proclaimed the Ocean Decade to support efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health and gather ocean stakeholders worldwide behind a common framework. It will ensure improved conditions for sustainable development by all countries with support from ocean science.

The vision of the Ocean Decade is 'The Science We Need for The Ocean We Want'. The mission of the Ocean Decade is 'To catalyze transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and our ocean'. It envisages a revolution in ocean science, which will trigger a steep change in humanity's relationship with the ocean.

World Ocean Assessment I and II report revealed that the oceans' carrying capacity is near or at its limit and is seriously degrading. As the human population is expected to be 9 billion by 2050, the impact of multiple stressors on the ocean will increase.

Therefore, adaptation strategies and science-based policy responses to global change are urgently needed.

To that end, a Decade of Ocean Science will help increase public awareness about the urgent need for new science and the use of existing science to increase our understanding of the cumulative impacts affecting our oceans.

The key objectives of the Ocean Decade are to identify required knowledge for sustainable development, generate comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the ocean and to increase the use of ocean knowledge.

Every human activity related to the sea depends on knowing the depth and nature of the sea-floor and understanding the tides and currents.

Hydrographic products and services are meant to support all activities associated with the oceans, seas and navigable waters. Therefore, hydrography is an essential foundation for the development of the Blue Economy.

The IHO is also working on the digital data and the standardization of data formats to ensure that ocean-related data gathered from various sources around the world is consistent and can be used by all ocean stakeholders.

The implementation of the Universal Hydrographic Data Model will enable other stakeholders to easily contribute and collect data more seamlessly.

IHO is also working with the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). This collaboration aims to increase available geospatial information on the marine environment to support national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 21st century is the last frontier to fight against the human-derived climate crisis. The oceans and oceanic ecosystems are the single largest system covering the entire earth's surface. Sustainable use of the oceans is no more a scientific study but rather a need in the fight for our planet's survival.

Hydrographers worldwide are contributing to the UN Ocean Decade through the active and passive data collection.

However, efforts are needed to utilize these data in the best ways and do necessary course corrections in national policymaking domains.

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