

## World Hydrography Day 2023

World Hydrography Day is celebrated every year on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June to raise awareness about hydrography and the role it plays in improved knowledge of the seas and oceans. The theme for this year is "*Hydrography - Underpinning the Digital Twin of the Ocean*".

2. The digital twin of the ocean aims to develop a consistent, high-resolution, multidimensional and near real-time virtual representation of the ocean that could make ocean knowledge open-access, available to citizens, scientists and policy-makers around the world, and will provide a platform for global cooperation. The theme is designed to highlight the relationship between hydrography and oceanography, and how hydrography can play a key role in developing the digital twin of the ocean.

3. As in previous years, the theme for 2023 is intended to provide a broad range of opportunities to publicise the hydrographic work and services provided by national hydrographic offices, industry stakeholders and expert contributors, and the scientific community. The theme also focuses attention on the fundamental importance of hydrography and our knowledge of the shape, nature and depth of the seafloor as a fundamental requirement for the proper, safe, sustainable and cost effective use of the world's seas, oceans and waterways.

4. The International Hydrographic Organisation defines hydrography as "the branch of applied sciences which deals with the measurement and description of the physical features of oceans, seas, coastal areas, lakes and rivers, as well as with the prediction of their change over time, for the primary purpose of safety of navigation and in support of all other marine activities, including economic development, security and defence, scientific research, and environmental protection."

5. Mankind is turning increasingly towards the seas and oceans for resources. In fact, the seas and oceans are now acknowledged as major contributors to the world economy and well-being. Over 90% of the world's

trade travels by sea. In addition, the seas and oceans, including the seabed and the sub-seabed, represent a vast resource for food, mineral resources, energy, water, bio-medicines, and infrastructure. The oceans and the way the water moves and behaves are major influences on weather and climate. The shape and the depth of the seafloor have a significant impact on how sea level rise, storms and tsunamis affect the coastline. Thus, knowledge about the depth of the seas and oceans is becoming more important than ever before.

6. In Mauritius, hydrography has a wide-ranging perspective considering the island's geo-strategic location in the Indian Ocean and large Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Mauritius Hydrographic Service, established in 2013 under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning is responsible for hydrographic surveying (surveying the oceans) and nautical charting in Mauritius. Additional details about hydrography and the Mauritius Hydrographic Service can be found in the attached brochure.

7. On this World Hydrography day, let us all embrace this moment to show our appreciation to our Earth's resources and recognize the vital role that hydrography plays in protecting marine life, supporting maritime safety and contributing towards the sustainable development of our seas/oceans.

*Mauritius Hydrographic Service  
Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning  
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Courtesy: International Hydrographic Organisation: <https://iho.int/en/>