



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Singapore Hosts the 1st General Assembly of the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) as an Inter-Governmental Organisation

Singapore is hosting the 1st General Assembly of the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) from 18 to 21 February 2025. This is IALA's inaugural General Assembly since becoming an intergovernmental organisation (IGO) on 22 August 2024, following the entry into force of the Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation¹.

2. Singapore's Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, Mr Teo Chee Hean, delivered the keynote address at the opening ceremony. In his address, Mr Teo highlighted the importance of international co-operation in enhancing navigational safety, and reaffirmed IALA's role and Singapore's support of IALA's mission to foster the safe and efficient movement of vessels for the benefit of the maritime community and the protection of the marine environment.

3. Established in 1957, IALA's transition from a non-governmental organisation to an IGO reflects its growing importance in shaping international standards and best practices for safe and efficient navigation. Its status as an IGO strengthens IALA's mandate to harmonise global maritime navigation systems, promote maritime safety initiatives, and

¹ In May 2014, the IALA General Assembly adopted a resolution to transit from a non-governmental organisation (NGO) to an inter-governmental organisation (IGO). The Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation ("Convention") was finalised in February 2020 and was open for signature to all member States of the United Nations from November 2020. Having met the minimum requirement of 30 ratifications, the former International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities officially changed its status from a NGO to an IGO on 22 August 2020 (i.e. 90 days after the date of deposit of the 30th instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession). Following the change in status, the organisation has been renamed the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation.

collaborate with its member states, international organisations, and industry stakeholders to address emerging challenges in maritime safety and environmental protection.

4. Bringing together about 400 delegates and attendees from 65 countries, comprising senior government officials and maritime leaders from industry associations and companies, the General Assembly provides a platform to discuss developments in Aids to Navigation, vessel traffic services, emerging technologies, and governance in emerging areas such as the use of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships. Delegates will also review progress in capacity-building efforts and technical cooperation to support the implementation of modern Aids to Navigation solutions, particularly in developing maritime nations. The General Assembly will also be electing the IALA Council for the next term and will set strategic priorities for the organisation's work in the coming years.

5. IALA Secretary-General, Mr Francis Zachariae, who delivered remarks at the Opening Ceremony, said: "I am deeply grateful to Singapore for elevating this first General Assembly to such a prestigious level. The transition to an intergovernmental organisation will enable IALA to collaborate more effectively with governments and other intergovernmental organisations. Most importantly, it will strengthen IALA's role as the leading international technical authority in its field, significantly enhancing global recognition of its work and the standards it seeks to establish. This, in turn, will promote greater harmonisation of Marine Aids to Navigation and related services worldwide. The continued strong participation of our industrial members will ensure that the vital connection between aids to navigation authorities and service providers remains intact, preserving the high quality and integrity of our work."

6. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IALA World-Wide Academy (IALA WWA) and MPA, a joint seminar on VHF Data Exchange System was organised by MPA, IALA WWA, and the Japan Coast Guard. The MoU, renewed for the period from 2024 to 2027, underscores Singapore's continued commitment to support capacity-building initiatives that enhance global maritime safety. The IALA WWA also held a seminar on the safety of navigation, focusing on key advancements in digitalisation and maritime connectivity.

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About the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA)

Founded in 1957, IALA brings together Marine Aids to Navigation authorities, manufacturers, consultants, and scientific and training organizations from around the world. Its mission is to harmonize Marine Aids to Navigation worldwide and ensure that the movement of vessels is safe expeditious and cost-effective while protecting the marine environment.

About the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)

MPA was established on 2 February 1996 with the mission to develop Singapore as a premier global hub port and international maritime centre, and to advance and safeguard Singapore's strategic maritime interests. MPA is the driving force behind Singapore's maritime and port development, taking on the roles of maritime and port regulator and planner, international maritime centre champion, national maritime representative, and a champion of digitalisation and decarbonisation efforts at regional and international fora such as at the International Maritime Organization and the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation. MPA partners industry, research community and other agencies to enhance safety, security, and environmental protection, facilitate maritime and port operations and growth, expand multi-domain capabilities, and support the cluster of maritime ancillary services and manpower development. MPA is responsible for the overall development and growth of the maritime multi-domain and the Port of Singapore.

For more information, please visit www.mpa.gov.sg/

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