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Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project operational

At a press conference, held on 20 February in Tokyo, the Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, has announced that The Nippon Foundation – GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project is now operational. The Project will realise Mr Sasakawa's vision to map the entirety of the world's ocean floor by 2030.



Mr Yohei Sasakawa launches the operational phase of The Nippon Foundation – GEBCO Seabed 2030 project in Tokyo

The Nippon Foundation, which has a long history of supporting maritime issues, has pledged \$2 million US dollars per year as seed money – and is calling on the resources of the international maritime community for additional support.

"The Nippon Foundation alone cannot achieve the objectives of this ambitious project," said Mr. Sasakawa. "We will need the support of a large number of stakeholders, including world-leading technical experts. It is crucially important that the maritime community comes together to achieve this important goal".

As discussed at the press conference by a panel of leading ocean-mapping experts, including GEBCO Guiding Committee Chairman, Shin Tani, and Vice Chairman, Professor Martin Jakobsson - understanding the bathymetry of the global ocean is imperative, not only for improving maritime navigation, but also for enhancing our ability to predict climate change

and monitor marine biodiversity and resources. The project will make a significant contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 14: 'to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development'.

The need for bathymetric data has recently been highlighted by the disappearance in March 2014 of Malaysian Airlines flight, MH370. A comprehensive map of the seafloor will assist global efforts to combat pollution, aid marine conservation, forecast tsunami wave propagation, and help inform the study of tides, wave action, and sediment transport.

First Director of Seabed 2030 Project announced

Just seven months after the launch of The Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project at the United Nations in New York City, the Tokyo event introduced its first Director, Mr. Satinder Bindra. Mr. Bindra, a former veteran international journalist, who has been appointed after an exhaustive global search, brings a wealth of experience to the project. He has worked for the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and UN Environment, where he promoted key environmental initiatives and sustainable development. He will lead and coordinate the efforts of the international project team.

Commenting on his appointment Mr. Bindra noted: "Since its launch, the project has made rapid progress, drawing on the experience of some 28 international organisations and networks spread across more than 50 countries. The project's structure is based on a roadmap produced by an establishment team of leading ocean mapping experts. Four Regional Centers have been set up, each with responsibility for a region of the world's ocean, with a Global Center to produce the global map."

The Regional Centers are based at The Alfred Wegener Institute (AWI), Germany, covering the Southern Ocean; The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), Wellington, New Zealand, covering the South and West Pacific Ocean; The Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University, USA, covering the Atlantic and Indian Oceans; and Stockholm University, Sweden, in partnership with the University of New Hampshire, USA, for the North Pacific and Arctic Ocean. The Global Center, which is responsible for centralised data management and products, is based at the UK National Oceanography Center, Southampton.

The project's regional centers were represented at the Tokyo event by Dr. Vicki Ferrini, from Columbia University, USA. David Millar, from one of the world's leading offshore surveying companies, Fugro; and Bjorn Jalving from Kongsberg Maritime, one of the world's leading maritime technology companies, represented private sector support for the initiative.

In his concluding remarks at the event, Mr Bindra stressed: "this is a challenging opportunity to build a global common good and do something meaningful for our future generations. The scale and scope of the project is such that we will have to work with international organisations, universities, civil society, the private sector, maritime industries -including fishing and shipping, youth organizations and citizens from every corner of the world. As we strengthen our co-operation, we will deepen our understanding of the oceans and enhance our ability to map the remaining 85 per cent of the ocean floor much faster than ever before."



From left to right: Mr Satinder Bindra, Director of the Seabed 2030 project; Mr Mitsuyuki Unno, Executive Director, the Nippon Foundation; Professor Martin Jakobsson, Stockholm University; Vice Admiral Shin Tani, Chairman, GEBCO Guiding Committee; Bjorn Jalving, Executive Vice-President, Kongsberg Maritime; Dr Vicki Ferrini, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory; David Millar, Fugro, Government Services Director, Americas.

For more detailed information on the Seabed 2030 Project, please visit our website, www.seabed2030.gebco.net – our Facebook page, or contact Satinder Bindra on satinder.bindra@seabed2030.org.

The Nippon Foundation, a private, non-profit foundation, was established in 1962 for the purpose of carrying out philanthropic activities, using revenue from motorboat racing. The Foundation's overall objectives include social innovation, assistance for humanitarian activities and global ocean management. Its philanthropic ideals embrace social development and self-sufficiency, and it pursues these principles by working to improve public health and education, alleviate poverty, eliminate hunger and help the disabled.

The General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) partners The Nippon Foundation in the Seabed 2030 Project. GEBCO is a joint project of the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO – the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. It is the only organisation with a mandate to map the entire ocean floor. It has its origins in the GEBCO chart series initiated in 1903 by Prince Albert I of Monaco, and aims to provide the most authoritative, publicly-available bathymetric datasets for the world's oceans.