

The Capacity-Building Activities of the International Seabed Authority

Presentation by Nii Allotey Odunton, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority in relation to Segment 2 of the Eleventh Meeting of the United Nations Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

The presentation provides an outline of the activities carried out by the International Seabed Authority (“the Authority”) to ensure that marine scientific research carried out in the Area observes the principle of the common heritage of mankind, as required by the Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement.

The Authority aims to help build capacity in developing States by enhancing opportunities for scientists and technicians to take part in collaborative international marine scientific research and training. It also aims to ensure the widespread dissemination of the results of research by developed countries and contractors with the Authority.

The presentation discusses three of the ways in which the Authority seeks to achieve these goals.

The International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research grants awards to enable scientists and technicians from developing countries to participate in relevant programmes through activities including research fellowships and training placements. The Authority has fostered a network of cooperating groups and institutions in order to provide opportunities for this kind of collaborative research and training. Participants from 18 developing countries have so far benefitted from Endowment Fund awards, and are now equipped to use their new expertise in their home countries and in future international collaboration. Five Endowment Fund-aided initiatives are detailed.

The presentation outlines the Authority’s ongoing programme of regional sensitization seminars, which are designed to inform government officials, marine policy-makers and scientists at national and regional institutions of the work of the Authority and to promote the participation of scientists in developing countries in marine scientific research in the Area. The seminars also enable the Authority to encourage the development of fair policies and regulations for the exploitation of marine minerals. To date, four sensitization seminars have taken place.

The presentation goes on to highlight the Tongji University-ISA Scholarship Programme, which, in collaboration with the Government of China, provides grants to support candidates from developing countries to pursue Master’s or Doctorate degrees in marine science at Tongji University, China.