



PRESENTATION BY

NII ALLOTEY ODUNTON

**SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY**

**IN RELATION TO SEGMENT 2 OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING
UNITED NATIONS INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON
OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA**

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The Capacity-Building Activities of the International Seabed Authority

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New York, 22 June 2010

Co-chairpersons, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to thank you for giving me this opportunity to make a presentation on the initiatives undertaken by the International Seabed Authority with respect to capacity building in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea.

As you know, the primary function of the Authority is to act as the regulator for deep seabed mining activities in the international seabed Area. At the same time, however, both the Convention and the 1994 Agreement emphasise the need for marine scientific research to be carried out in the Area to benefit mankind as a whole. This is an enormous undertaking: the ocean floor in the international seabed Area covers more than 50 per cent of the Earth's surface and we are largely ignorant of its physical, biological and geological characteristics. Furthermore, only a minority of developed countries possess the necessary technology and technological skills to carry out such research.

The Convention exhorts States Parties to promote international cooperation in marine scientific research in the Area and to ensure that programmes are developed through the Authority or other international organisations for the benefit of developing States, particularly with a view to strengthening their research capabilities and training their personnel in the techniques and applications of research.

Given the long delay in the commencement of commercial mining of the seabed, both my predecessor as Secretary-General and I have taken the firm view that the most practical, immediate and realistic ways in which the Authority can give effect to the principle of the common heritage of mankind are, on the one hand, to promote the participation of scientists and technicians from developing countries in collaborative marine scientific research programmes, and on the other hand to encourage the open and widespread dissemination of the results of research carried out by developed countries and the contractors with the Authority. This has been an important element of the Authority's work programme in past years and continues to have a high priority in the 2011-2013 work programme recently approved by the Assembly.

In this short presentation I would like to briefly outline how the Authority seeks to develop the capacity of developing States to participate in and benefit from the results of marine scientific research in the Area.

Endowment Fund

The first initiative I wish to describe is the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research. The Fund was launched in 2006 and became operational in late 2008. Its objective is to promote the conduct of collaborative marine scientific research in the international seabed Area by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technicians from developing countries in relevant programmes, initiatives and activities. The Fund was launched with an initial capital of US\$3 million. Further financial contributions have been made by the governments of Germany, Mexico, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. The Fund operates on a grant basis, in accordance with terms of reference approved by the Assembly of the Authority, and guidelines have been published to help potential funding recipients to prepare applications for assistance.

In order to maximise the potential of the Fund we have focused on building a network of cooperating groups and institutions interested in or presently undertaking relevant programmes and activities. The idea is that members of the network may be able to provide training programmes themselves or make other contributions in kind, such as laboratory space or equipment, berths on research vessels or even just facilitate contacts within the global scientific community. Current network members include the National Oceanography Centre (United Kingdom); the National Institute of Ocean Technology (India); the French Institute for the Exploration of the Sea (Ifremer); the Federal Institute of Geosciences and Natural Resources (Germany); the National Institute of Oceanography (India); the Natural History Museum (United Kingdom); Duke University (USA); and InterRidge, an international non-profit programme promoting interdisciplinary studies of oceanic spreading centres.

In the first two years of its operation, six awards have been made by the Endowment Fund benefiting 18 scientists and technicians from 14 developing countries including Argentina, Bangladesh, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Let me briefly describe some of these awards.

The InterRidge/ISA post-doctoral fellowship programme allows InterRidge to offer two fellowships each year from 2009 to 2011 to enable qualified individuals from developing countries to incorporate an international component to their research in ridge crest science. In 2009 this allowed a scientist from India to learn and apply sophisticated analytical techniques,

which were not otherwise available in India, to water samples collected from the Carlsberg Ridge in the Indian Ocean.

The Authority collaborated with the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa, India, to develop the Technical Assistance Program-Marine Scientific Research (TAP-MAR) initiative. In 2009, three individuals from Argentina, Nigeria and Sri Lanka, benefited from this seven-week training programme, which incorporated practical training in laboratory and field techniques, a series of lectures and individually-supervised research programmes. It is hoped that this initiative will result in research programmes involving the trainees, their institutions and NIO to enable additional and ongoing capacity building. Thanks to the generous in kind support provided by the NIO, the programme was so successful that the programme will be expanded in 2010 to provide training for up to eight individuals from developing countries. Applications are now open for this opportunity and I would encourage everyone to visit the Authority's website and to circulate the information as widely as possible.

The Endowment Fund also made an award to the Rhodes Academy of Ocean Law and Policy in 2009 to co-fund nine participants from developing countries who would otherwise not have been able to take part in this prestigious programme. Again, this was extremely successful and a similar award has been made for 2010. Most importantly, support from the Endowment Fund has allowed the Rhodes Academy to expand its curriculum to incorporate segments specifically related to the deep seabed and the importance of marine science.

Another award has allowed a scientist from Papua New Guinea to spend time at the Duke University marine laboratory to develop conservation strategies for seafloor massive sulphide ecosystems. It is hoped that information generated through the collaboration with Duke University will directly assist the national authorities to deploy adequate conservation strategies, which is particularly important given that Papua New Guinea intends to commence seafloor mining operations in the near future.

Applications are also currently invited for participation in an international cooperative study with China on seafloor hydrothermal systems in the Indian Ocean. This programme provides places for two scientists from developing countries to receive training during a research cruise aboard the Chinese research vessel *Da Yang Yi Hao*. Again, details of this opportunity and the application process are available on the Authority's website and I encourage all of you to take a look.

Co-Chairpersons,

The high level of interest shown in the work of the Fund by institutions from a wide range of countries clearly indicates a need for enhanced cooperation with developing countries in marine scientific research that is not currently being met by other sources. The Endowment

Fund is able to leverage scarce funds by encouraging partnership in often very costly scientific research. It also links scientists from around the world to an international network of deep-sea researchers and scientists that encourages collaborative research and the sharing of information. Furthermore, the Fund has an important role to play in increasing scientific research in the deep sea, where biodiversity, ecosystems and marine resource dynamics may not be fully understood. By expanding knowledge in this area, the Authority can ensure that the effects of future mining and prospecting activities do not cause undue harm to the deep-sea environment.

The Endowment Fund also facilitates the transfer of multi-disciplinary skills to scientists and technicians from developing countries by providing opportunities for the practical application of knowledge and scientific research techniques.

It is hoped that the positive results shown to date will encourage further financial and in kind contributions to the Fund to enable its development for the long-term benefit of developing State members of the Authority. I encourage all States, funding organizations and institutions to consider a partnership with the Authority in this regard.

Sensitization seminars

Whilst the meetings, workshops and other substantive activities of the Authority provide a wealth of information to member States, this information will only be used if it reaches those it can benefit. Since 2007, therefore, the Authority has been conducting regional sensitization seminars on marine minerals and other issues relevant to its work. These seminars 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 participation by scientists from developing countries in marine scientific research in the Area by international research organizations. Typically, the seminars include expert presentations on the minerals to be found in the Area, resource evaluation, the potential environmental impacts of marine mining, the status of the legal regimes established for the recovery of seabed minerals, and regional issues relating to the law of the sea.

To date, four such seminars have taken place: in Manado, Indonesia (March 2007); Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (November 2008); Abuja, Nigeria (March 2009); and Madrid, Spain (February 2010). A fifth seminar (for the Caribbean region) will be held in Jamaica in September 2010.

As a direct result of the Rio de Janeiro seminar, the Government of Brazil initiated a project to integrate all the information available in Brazil and abroad on the geology and mineral resources of the Equatorial and South Atlantic Ocean, an area where relatively little mineral prospecting has taken place so far. This project, to be carried out in collaboration with other countries interested in the Equatorial and South Atlantic and the Authority, involves the

creation of a single geographic information system to help identify areas containing valuable mineral resources, and to assist in developing techniques for the geophysical and geological reconnaissance of mineral resources. The project also envisions capacity-building in marine minerals prospecting and marine scientific research in relation to the biodiversity associated with mineral deposits in the South Atlantic for developing States bordering the South Atlantic.

Another important function of the sensitization seminars is to assist the Authority in the implementation of its role in encouraging the development of fair and equitable policies and regulations for exploitation of marine minerals, both in the Area and other areas under national jurisdiction. This is particularly important since, in previous sessions of the Assembly, several developing State members have called for assistance in the development of national legislation regarding exploration for and exploitation of marine minerals. In discussions in the Assembly, many States have noted that they lack such legislation and that they look to the international regime to form a valuable precedent for appropriate regulatory measures that, amongst other things, ensure adequate protection for the marine environment. The current programme of regional sensitization seminars is a positive step in terms of giving effect to these concerns.

Tongji University-ISA Scholarship Programme

The third initiative I would like to highlight is a scholarship programme recently launched in collaboration with the Government of China. Under this programme, China has granted funding to support between three and five candidates from developing countries to pursue Master's or Doctorate degrees in marine science at Tongji University in Shanghai, China. Applications remain open until November 2010, when the Authority will identify qualified applicants for the formation of a shortlist. Again, all the details are on the Authority's website.

Co-Chairpersons,

This has been only a short summary of the capacity building activities carried out by the International Seabed Authority. For those who would like to know more, we will be holding a side event on Wednesday at 13:15, at which we will provide more information about the Endowment Fund. One of the recipients of financial support from the Fund will also be available to discuss his experiences. You are all invited to attend and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there.