



Contribution to the Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to UNGA resolution 72/124 of 11 December 2018, entitled ‘Oceans and the law of the sea’

Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebrations

1. The International Seabed Authority was formally established when the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea entered into force on 16 November 1994, as such, this year marks the 25th Anniversary of the Authority. A special commemorative event will be held on 25 July 2019, including a special commemorative session of the Assembly. The event will include three segments. The first two segments will feature the 2019 Edition of the Secretary-General’s Award for Excellence in Deep Sea Research and a high-level panel on capacity-building. High level officials from member States are expected to be in attendance, as well as officials, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General for the United Nations Oceans Conference in 2020, the President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and the Chairman of the Commission for the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

The High –Level Action plan

2. At its 24th session, the Assembly approved the Strategic Plan for the Authority for the period 2019-2023 which includes nine (9) strategic directions to enable the ISA achieve its mission objectives. As the next step in the development of the Strategic Plan, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General inter alia “to prepare a high-level action plan and to include key performance indicators and a list of outputs for the next five years, taking into account available financial and human resources”. A draft high-level action plan identifying the actions required and providing the linkage between the ISA’s strategy and the work of the various organs of the Organization was developed and submitted for public consultation in May 2019. The draft will be revised to take into account the suggestions and comments received during the consultation. A revised text will be presented to the 25th Session of the Assembly of the Authority for consideration and adoption.

Development of the Mining Code

3. The highest priority for the Authority is to advance its work on the development of the Mining Code and adopt same in 2020. At the first part of the session in February 2019, the Council continued its consideration of the draft exploitation code focusing on the financial payment mechanism, the development of standards and guidelines, delegation of functions and regulatory efficiency, amongst others and provided further direction and guidance to the Commission as it continued its review of the draft regulations. On 15 March 2019, the Commission issued a set of revised draft regulations and a commentary to serve as a working paper for the Council’s consideration in second part of the Session, which will hold in July 2019.

4. One key component of the Council discussions in February 2019 was with respect to the content and development of standards and guidelines to support the implementation of the mining code, the Council requested that the Legal and Technical Commission review and prioritize a list of Standards and Guidelines to ensure that the list is all encompassing, comprehensive and make

recommendations to the Council in this regard. The Commission was also requested to develop terms of reference for a workshop to address these critical components on the development process.

5. In light of the above, in May 2019, a workshop was held in Pretoria bringing together experts from a wide range of backgrounds to assist in reviewing and prioritizing a list of Standards and Guidelines to be implemented within timelines and using a phased approach. The workshop also aimed to establish a suggested process by which standards and guidelines are to be developed within the organs of the ISA. The workshop was organized by the ISA in collaboration with the Government of South Africa and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

Implementation and development of the Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMPs)

6. Another major development in the Authority's work program relates to the protection on marine environment in the development of additional regional environmental management plans (REMPs) in the Area. In May 2019, an expert meeting to explore the feasibility of applying various management approaches to regional environmental management plans, building on experiences and lessons learned from other ocean industries, was convened in Paris by the Atlantic regional environmental management plan project (sponsored by the European Union) in collaboration with the ISA. Several workshops have been planned for 2019 and 2020 to facilitate the development and review of REMPs:

- **October 2019-** an expert workshop on Clarion-Clipperton Zone biodiversity synthesis organized by the secretariat and the Deep Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ) Project of the University of Hawaii to review and analyze recent seafloor ecosystem data from the Clarion-Clipperton Zone to synthesize patterns of biodiversity, community structure, species ranges, genetic connectivity, ecosystem function and habitat heterogeneity along and across the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.
- **November 2019-** a workshop on regional environmental assessment in support of the development of a REMP for the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge will be held in Portugal (subject to final confirmation), in collaboration with the Atlantic regional environmental management plan project and the Government of Portugal.
- **November 2019-** a workshop will be held in Germany to discuss strategic approaches for developing REMPs in collaboration with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany.
- **February 2020-** the second workshop on developing a REMP in the cobalt crust area of the north-west Pacific will be held in the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and ISBA/25/A/2 16/26 19-08991 the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, building on the work of the workshop held in Qingdao, China, in May 2018.
- **June 2020-** a workshop on developing a REMP for the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge will be held in the Russian Federation, in collaboration with the Atlantic regional environmental management plan project and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

The Enterprise

7. In accordance with the decision adopted by the Council at the first part of its session in the first part of the 25th Session, a Special Representative for the Enterprise, Mr. Eden Charles (Trinidad & Tobago) will present a report to the Council on matters relating to the Enterprise. This includes an oral report on the status of negotiations with the Government of Poland on its proposals to enter into a joint venture with the Enterprise as well as a report on the legal, financial and operational issues

associated with the Enterprise. This report and an executive summary highlighting the principal recommendations of the Study are available on the website of the Authority in the form of an advance unedited text.

Deposit of charts or lists of coordinates under article 84, paragraph 2 of the Convention

8. Pursuant to article 84, paragraph 2, of the Convention, coastal States are obliged to give due publicity to charts or lists of geographical coordinates of points and, in the case of those indicating the outer limit lines of the continental shelf, to deposit a copy of such charts or lists with the Secretary-General of the Authority. As at 24 June 2019, ten members of the Authority have deposited such charts and lists with the Secretary-General, namely: Australia, Bahrain, France (with respect to Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana, New Caledonia and the Kerguelen islands), Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Niue, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tuvalu.

9. The Secretary-General has urged all coastal States which have not done so to deposit such charts or lists of coordinates as soon as possible in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention.

Capacity-building and training program

Contractors training programmes

10. The Authority discharges its obligation pursuant to Articles 143 and 144 of the Convention to promote marine scientific research in the Area and build the capacity of developing States in deep-sea research and technology through the training programs provided by the Contractors under exploration contracts with the Authority and the Endowment Fund for marine scientific research in the Area. From 2013 to 2018, a total of 98 training places were provided by 19 contractors. The types of training included at-sea training, engineering training, fellowship training (including master's and PhD programs), internships, workshops and seminars. Among the selected trainees, 34 were from the African group, 31 from the Asia-Pacific group, 3 from the Eastern European group and 30 from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Out of the 98 trainees, a total of 39 were women.

11. As at 31 May 2019, 36 candidates had been selected for training placements in 2019 pursuant to 11 exploration contracts (15 from the African group, 11 from the Asia-Pacific group, and 10 from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States). 18 of the successful candidates were women. All training opportunities are advertised on the Authority's website, social media platforms and are circulated to members of the Authority.

12. If all existing contracts and approved plans of work are implemented according to the recommendations made by the Legal and Technical Commission with respect to training programs, approximately 270 additional training places will be made available by contractors between 2019 and 2023.

Endowment fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area

13. The Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area aims to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole, in particular by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programs and offering them opportunities to participate in training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programs. As at 31 May 2019, a total of 145 young scientists or government officials from 50 countries had benefited from the Fund. The beneficiaries include representatives of all regional groups: 52 from the African group, 56 from the Asia-Pacific group, 24 from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, 3 from the Western European and other States group.

Secretary-General's Award for Excellence in Deep Sea Research

14. The inaugural event of the Secretary-General's Award for Excellence in Deep-sea Research was held during the twenty-fourth session of the Assembly. In July 2018, Diva Amon (Trinidad and Tobago), a deep-sea biologist, received an award for her extensive research and exploration experience at sea, which have contributed to advancing understanding of abyssal ecosystems and the environmental impacts of human industrial activities in the deep sea. In February 2019, the Government of Monaco informed the Secretary-General of its decision to support the Award with a grant of \$15,000 that will be used to award a prize to the 2018 and 2019 awardees, cover the cost of the tickets for the attendance of the 2019 awardee, as well as the publication fees of her/his research in a relevant scientific (open-access) journal.

Implementation of Voluntary Commitments

15. The Authority actively contributed to the work and discussions of the United Nations Ocean Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, held in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017. On that occasion, the Authority registered a series of voluntary commitments with a view to:

- (a) Enhancing the role of women in marine scientific research through capacity-building;
- (b) Encouraging the dissemination of research results through the Authority Secretary-General's Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research;
- (c) Improving the assessment of essential ecological functions of the deep sea oceans through long-term underwater oceanographic observatories in the Area; and
- (d) Enhancing deep sea marine biodiversity assessment through the creation of online taxonomic atlases linked to deep mining activities in the Area.

16. Additional voluntary commitments were registered in partnership with other agencies, notably with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat on the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth¹ and with the African Minerals Development Centre². Progress has been made in the implementation of the voluntary commitment dedicated to enhancing the role of women in marine scientific research through capacity-building. Further initiatives are currently under consideration in partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the World Maritime University.

Relationship with International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

17. In September 2018, the Secretary-General of the Authority met with members of the Tribunal and of the Seabed Disputes Chamber at the Tribunal's headquarters in Hamburg, Germany to brief on the work of the Authority, by particularly focusing on the developments related to draft exploitation regulations. During this visit, an informal meeting on administrative matters was held with the President of the Tribunal and with the Registrar and the Deputy-Registrar. In the meeting, there was an exchange of information on mutual administrative issues

18. In addition, the Secretary-General, the Legal Counsel of the Authority and the President of the Tribunal and the Registrar held a meeting on 10 December 2018 in New York. Together with officials from DOALOS. Discussions were also held on budgetary and cost-saving measures, IPSAS implementation, human resources and staff rules, UNV and JPO programmes, as well as on the possibility to cooperate to join the INSPIRA system.

¹ On advancing Sustainable Development Goal 14 and the quest for a Blue Economy through the promotion of socioeconomic benefits for developing countries, including small island developing States, and increasing scientific knowledge and research capacity

² On fostering cooperation to promote the sustainable development of Africa's deep seabed resources in support to Africa's Blue Economy and mapping the Blue Economy of Africa to support decision-making, investment and governance of activities undertaken on the extended continental shelf and in adjacent international seabed areas.

Relationship with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations and bodies

19. The ISA secretariat has participated in a number of initiatives with other relevant organizations aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and dialogue among users of the Area. The Authority is a member of UN-Oceans and the secretariat participates in its meetings, as appropriate, and in accordance with its mandate. During the reporting period, the secretariat participated remotely to the nineteenth face-to-face meeting of UN-Oceans held at the World Meteorological Organization Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs (DOALOS)

20. The Authority also has a close and productive working relationship with the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. An informal meeting was held in March 2019 between the secretariat and DOALOS to exchange information and promote cooperation, in particular in respect of updating a joint technical study on deep seabed minerals, geographic information systems (GIS) and implementation of article 84 of the Convention. The Secretary General of the Authority also provided information on the activities of the ISA to the 29 Meeting of State Parties and participated in the UN Open-Ended ICP on Oceans and the Law of the Sea which held from 10-14 June 2019 in New York.

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO)

21. During the reporting period, the secretariats of the Authority and the IOC-UNESCO have worked in close collaboration to progress implementation of the existing Memorandum of Understanding between both organizations. A series of working briefings and meetings took place in order to maintain an ongoing dialogue between the two organizations and coordinate activities of common interest. The Authority participated at the First Global Planning Meeting of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, held from 13-15 May 2019 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The secretariat highlighted that IOC-UNESCO and the Authority have joined forces to achieve shared objectives, such as improved mapping of the seabed through the project Seabed 2030, exchange of data and information between OBIS and the ISA Database, and promote a standardized approach for taxonomic identification, including the organization of inter-calibration workshops.

International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Maritime University (WMU)

22. The IMO and the Authority have a joint initiative to clarify the respective regulatory competences of IMO and the Authority on aspects related to ships and installations engaged in activities in the Area and related maritime transportation in the high seas, including transportation of minerals to processing on land. One critical aspect that was explored under this initiative is the respective functions in the protection of the marine environment from pollution in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

23. In November 2018, the Authority and WMU signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their cooperation with a view, among other things, to advance achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14. The focus is on improving education and capacity-building initiatives in marine science. Under the MoU, both organizations have agreed to develop collaborative research in the fields of ocean sustainability, ocean governance, SDG implementation for the oceans, deepening understanding of the ecosystem functions and services of the international deep seabed area, and the science-law-policy interface.

International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC)

24. On 29-30 October 2018, under the framework of the MoU between ICPC and the Authority, the Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Thailand and the ICPC organized a second workshop on submarine cables and activities in the Area, devoted to “developing practical options for the implementation of the “due regard and reasonable regard” obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea”. The proceedings of the workshop have been published as an ISA technical study.

Intergovernmental Conference on an internationally legally binding instrument under the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

25. The secretariat participated in the first and second substantive sessions of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction:

26. During the first session held in September 2018, the secretariat made five statements respectively in regard to exchange of views, marine genetic resources including questions on the sharing of benefits, measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessment as well as capacity building and transfer of marine technology. In addition, the secretariat organized with other partners three side events respectively on “Enhancing deep sea marine biodiversity assessment through the creation of taxonomic atlases and the ISA Open Deep-Sea Database”, “Promoting increased participation of developing States in marine scientific research programmes and transfer of technology through capacity building: the role of the International Seabed Authority” and “Towards the development of regional environmental management plans in the Northwest Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans”.

27. During the second session in March and April 2019, the secretariat delivered a statement under general exchange of views and delivered a joint statement with IMO under cross-cutting issues. In the joint statement, both organizations highlighted the importance to facilitate mutual cooperation between the organizations and which do not undermine it. In addition, it was also highlighted that the work of the Conference should be fully consistent with rights and obligations established in the Convention, in particular in those areas where there are well developed and detailed frameworks, like shipping and navigation and the Part XI regime. Two side events were also organized in collaboration with other partners. The first one was entitled “Twenty-five years of ISA’s contribution to applying holistic approach to the protection of the marine environment in the Area” with MABIK, and the other entitled “Twenty-five years of ISA’s contribution to deep-sea marine scientific research and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for sustainable development (2021-2030)”, which was organized in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)/UNESCO.

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