



Organizational session of the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

8 February 2021

REMARKS

by H.E Mr. Michael W. Lodge,
Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

Under-Secretary General 'Utoikamanu,
Ambassador Perks Master Ligoya,
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for this opportunity to intervene on behalf of the International Seabed Authority.

The ISA was established 26 years ago by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Our mandate is to ensure the sustainable management of deep-sea minerals beyond national jurisdiction for the benefit of all humanity.

In doing so, ISA must promote the effective participation of developing States in deep-sea exploration and mineral exploitation. We must also recognize the special needs of the least technologically advanced States. This is the direct result of the strong engagement of the Group of 77 during the negotiation that led to the adoption of UNCLOS.

As a result, Least Developed States have the right to conduct marine scientific research in the deep sea, participate in deep sea mineral exploration, and receive an equitable share of the financial and economic benefits from deep-sea minerals.

The rights accorded to LDCs and recognized in UNCLOS are fundamental to achieving the priority areas identified in the Istanbul Programme of Action and ensuring that all can benefit from the promises of the blue economy.

Since I took office, I have taken a particularly active interest in the work of the UN-OHRLLS and continue to urge LDCs to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. I also urge the remaining 8 of them (Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Rwanda and South Sudan) who are not yet party to UNCLOS to become parties as soon as possible.

Since 2018, ISA has implemented several actions in support of LDCs and we are now ready to amplify and increase these efforts.

In December 2020, the ISA Assembly adopted an Action Plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science. One of the priority actions in this plan is to address the priority needs of LDCs in relation to marine scientific research beyond national jurisdiction,

We have also established a new partnership with UN-OHRLLS to enhance the role and participation of women in deep-sea research, particularly women scientists from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you all to attend a High-Level Event to be organized by ISA and UNOHRLLS on 8 March 2021 to launch this partnership and celebrate International Women's Day.

These initiatives have the potential to provide new opportunities for economic and social development to all developing countries, but particularly LDCs.

ISA looks forward to supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action during the Preparatory Conference and beyond. I wish to assure you of our constant commitment to addressing the special needs of LDCs in all aspects of our work.