

## Four Pending Applications for Exploration Contracts to be Considered at ISA 17th Session

Among the most important substantive issues to be discussed in the forthcoming 17th session of the Council and Legal and Technical Commission of the International Seabed Authority are four pending applications for exploration contracts in the Area.

Speaking at the 21st Meeting of the States Parties to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in New York, Mr. Nii A. Odunton, the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, said that two of the four applications had been submitted by private sector entities sponsored by Nauru and Tonga respectively. These applications represent a milestone for

the Authority as it is the first time that a private sector entity has submitted such a request since the Authority came into existence in 1994.

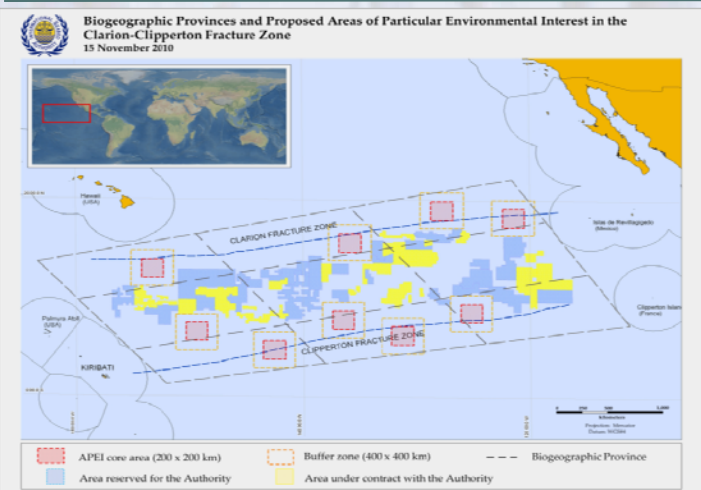
The other two applications under consideration, submitted by China and the Russian Federation, are also ground-breaking in nature as they represent the first applications made for contracts for exploration for polymetallic sulphides - a new type of mineral resource for which regulations were adopted by the Authority in 2010.

Mr. Odunton said that the number of private sector mining companies and deep-ocean technology companies participating in seminars and

workshops organized by the Authority has been growing steadily in recent years, and that these applications highlight a renewed commercial interest in deep seabed mining as an alternative source for minerals needed to fuel economic development in fast-growing economies in different parts of the world.

"This is encouraging for both the Authority and member States, who will be the ultimate beneficiaries from seabed mining," he added.

Mr. Odunton informed States Parties that the Authority would also be discussing proposals for an environmental management plan at the regional scale for the CCZ.



### *Environmental Management Plan Proposal for the CCZ*

Following the 2010 workshop on the establishment of a regional environmental management plan (EMP) for the CCZ in the Central Pacific, representatives of ISA contractors, OSPAR, CBD, IUCN, WWF and experts

produced a draft EMP for consideration by the LTC at the 17th Session.

The draft EMP proposes to establish a network of nine Areas of Particular Environmental Interest (APEIs) covering 1.5 million km<sup>2</sup> which is approximately one third of the area being managed.

The largest high seas MPA that has been established is the Chagos Marine Reserve.

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## 17th Session Brief

The 17th Session of the Authority will be held from 11—22 July 2011.

The Assembly and Council will hold their first meetings on 12 July 2011

The Finance Committee also commences its meeting on 12 July 2011.

The Legal and Technical Commission will meet from 4-8 July 2011, one week prior to the main session.

It is the turn of the Asian Group to nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Assembly. It is the turn of the Eastern European Group to nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Council.

It is the turn of the Group of African States to designate the member of the Council that will participate in the deliberations without the right to vote in 2011 in order to achieve equitable geographical representation in the Council.



## New Permanent Representatives to the Authority

New representatives of five member States presented their credentials to the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority recently.

They were Ambassador Mathu Joyini of the High Commission of the Republic of South Africa who presented her credentials on 24 March 2011; Ambassador Celsa Nuño of the Embassy of Spain who presented her credentials on 25 March 2011; Ambassador Lim Ki-mo of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea who presented his credentials on 3 May 2011; Ambassador Zheng Qingdian of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China who presented his credentials on 16 May 2011; Ambassador Antonio Francisco da Costa e Silva Neto of the Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil who presented his credentials on 26 May 2011 and Ambassador Dr. Iva Gloudon of the Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago who presented her credentials on 29 June 2011.

***Caption:*** Permanent Representatives with the Secretary-General, Nii A Odunton (top-bottom): Ambassador Mathu Joyini, Ambassador Celsa Nuño, Ambassador Lim Ki-mo, Ambassador Zheng Qingdian, Ambassador Antonio Francisco da Costa e Silva Neto and Ambassador Dr. Iva Gloudon.

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# ISA/Tongji Scholarship Programme



Scholarship Awardees: Ms. Francia Nelly Randriambao, Mr. Celso Matsinhe, Mr. Adolfo Jose Albino, Ms. Valentina Joaquina Vassele and Mr. Bountheva Louangsouphom

Five candidates from ISA member States have been awarded scholarships for Master and Doctorate Degrees under the ISA-Tongji Scholarship Programme at the Tongji University's School of Oceanic and Earth Sciences in China.

The recipients for the Master Degree scholarships are Mr. Adolfo Jose Albino and Mr. Celso Matsinhe, of the Republic of Mozambique; and Ms. Francia Nelly Randriambao of the Republic of Madagascar.

The recipients for the Doctoral Degree

scholarships are Ms. Valentina Joaquina Vassele of the Republic of Mozambique, and Mr. Bountheva Louangsouphom of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The five awardees are expected to commence their respective post-graduate degree courses in Shanghai, China in the fall of 2011.

The scholarship awards supporting candidates from developing countries in the field of marine sciences stem from a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in June 2009 between COMRA and the International Seabed Authority.

## InterRidge/ISA Endowment Fund Fellowship

The InterRidge/ISA Endowment Fund Fellowship Programme recently awarded fellowships to three students from developing countries.

The three successful applicants for the InterRidge/ISA Endowment Fund Fellowships are Girish Beedessee of Mauritius, and Srinivas Rao and Sabyasachi Sautya of India.

The InterRidge Student and Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme continues to develop and reach out to the global community of young ocean scientists. In the past three years a successful partnership has been established between InterRidge and the ISA Endowment Fund, designed to support early career scientists from developing countries in collaborative marine scientific research.

**Caption:** (top-bottom) Girish Beedessee, Srinivas Rao and Sabyasachi Sautya

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## Experts Participate in Deep-Sea Minerals Workshop

Some of the world's leading specialists on issues relating to deep-sea minerals attended a three-day workshop from 6 - 8 June 2011 in Nadi, Fiji. The Deep Sea Minerals Project, administered by SOPAC, a division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community based in Fiji, and funded by EU, addressed legislative, regulatory, capacity requirements and environmental issues pertaining to deep-sea minerals and mining for countries in the Pacific over a four-year period.

Participants included Michael Lodge of the Seabed Authority, Dr. James Hein of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Dr. Linwood Pendleton of NOAA, Dr. Yannick Beaudoin of UNEP/GRID-Arendal, Prof. Chuck Fisher of the Pennsylvania State University, Dr. Sven Peterson of Marine Sciences (IFM-GEOMAR) in Germany, Dr. Samantha Smith of Nautilus Minerals, and Daniel Dumas of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The workshop is part of the Deep Sea Minerals Project and reflects the growing interest in the region, with the first commercial mining lease being granted in Papua New Guinea territorial waters to mine 'high grade' Seafloor Massive Sulphide (SMS) deposits.

Presently, about eight countries in the Pacific region have granted and/or are at various stages of granting exploration licenses.

PNG Ready for Mining on page 6

# Advisory Opinion of the Seabed Disputes Chamber

In Issue 7 of our newsletter, we wrote about the public hearing of the Seabed Disputes Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of Sea regarding the Request for an Advisory Opinion on the responsibilities and obligations of States sponsoring persons and entities with respect to activities in the international seabed area.

The request was submitted to the Chamber by the Council of the ISA on the following questions:

- “1. What are the legal responsibilities and obligations of States Parties to the Convention with respect to the sponsorship of activities in the Area in accordance with the Convention, in particular Part XI, and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982?”
2. What is the extent of liability of a State Party for any failure to comply with the provisions of the Convention, in particular Part XI, and the 1994 Agreement, by an entity whom it has sponsored under article 153,



*Seabed Disputes Chamber of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea,*

paragraph 2 (b), of the Convention?”

3. What are the necessary and appropriate measures that a sponsoring State must take in order to fulfil its responsibility under the Convention, in particular article 139 and annex III, and the 1994 Agreement?”

The public hearing of the Seabed Disputes Chamber opened on 14 September 2010. Nine states and three

intergovernmental organizations participated in the hearing including the ISA who also submitted a statement and provided background information on the request.

On 1 February 2011, the Seabed Disputes Chamber unanimously adopted its advisory opinion. The text of the *dispositif* of the advisory opinion will be made available to members of

the Council and to members of the Legal and Technical Commission. The written and oral proceedings are available on the Tribunal's website ([www.itlos.org](http://www.itlos.org)).

Council is expected to discuss the content of the advisory opinion and to make such recommendations for further action as it deems necessary.

## **Environmental Management Plan**

The workshop to develop an Environmental Management Plan for the CCZ was held in Kingston in November 2010. The objectives of the workshop were to further review a proposal currently under consideration by the Legal and Technical Commission for the establishment of a network of areas of particular environmental interest in the CCZ, and

identify how the establishment of such a network could contribute to the general objectives of the environmental regime established by the Authority; advise on the formulation of a regional scale environmental management plan for the CCZ, based on the best available scientific knowledge, including the conservation objectives for the CCZ and a comprehensive environmental monitoring programme; and identify the data available, including that collected by existing contractors with the Authority, to support such a management plan and future scientific research needs.

The proposed EMP for the CCZ incorporates a series of areas that have been assigned for exploration and prospecting rights for polymetallic nodules. It adopts a holistic approach to the environmental management of the CCZ in its entirety including, where appropriate, consideration of cumulative impacts, incorporating environmental risk assessments of new and developing technologies, while giving due consideration to relevant global initiatives and new legislation.



*Experts at the workshop for the establishment of a Regional Environmental Plan for the CCZ*

The vision of the Authority is to facilitate mining while minimizing as far as practically possible, the impact of seabed mining activities, and preserving and conserving marine biodiversity and ecosystem structure and function in the CCZ.

# Caribbean Seminar Recommends Improved Collaboration

The International Seabed Authority and the Government of Jamaica recently co-hosted a Seminar on Prospecting, Exploration and Exploitation of Deep Seabed Mineral Resources in the Area : Challenges for the Caribbean and Opportunities for Collaboration in Kingston, Jamaica from 28-30 March 2011.

The seminar, webcast live, highlighted the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the 1994 Implementation Agreement, the institutions created under the Convention; the international framework and regulation of deep seabed; the role of the International Seabed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea; addressed the current state of development of deep seabed mineral resources, with emphasis on marine mineral resources of the Area; and examined the challenges and collaboration opportunities for the Caribbean.

Presentations were made by experts on the process and status of

the legal regimes established for recovery of these minerals, the types of minerals to be found in the Area, resource evaluation, the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the Authority's Endowment Fund.

The seminar recommended the following:

1. Improved regional collaboration in performing Marine Scientific Research in the Caribbean:
  - Seafloor mapping
  - Marine Geology
  - Marine Biology
2. Expanded international participation in the region - i.e. provision of resources; personnel, assets (ship, ROV, AUV).
3. Additional capacity building efforts through the ISA Endowment Fund.
4. Economic evaluation of resources (marine mineral) in the Caribbean region.
5. To improve better

understanding and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is the framework treaty for all activities in the oceans and seas.

Similar sensitization seminars were held in Indonesia (2007), Brazil (2008), Nigeria (2009) and Spain (2010).

In Brazil, participants developed a proposal for collaborations by the states bordering the South and Equatorial Atlantic Ocean for increased research on the mineral resources in this part of the Area. In Nigeria, participants recommended that the International Seabed Authority address the African Union to sensitize policymakers on marine mineral resources of the Area and encouraged all African countries to participate in the global programme to realize the benefits accruable, utilizing the resources in the Area as described in UNCLOS article 136 as the "Common Heritage of Mankind".



*Participants at the Sensitization Seminar*

# Elections for Finance Committee and Legal and Technical Commission at Authority's 17th Session

The election for members to the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) and the Finance Committee (FC) will be held in July during the Authority's 17th Annual Session.

For the LTC, nominations have been received from 26 countries and are as follows:

ADEGBIE, Adesina Thompson (Nigeria)  
AL-FARHAN, Farhan M. S. (Saudi Arabia)  
BILLET, David United (Kingdom)  
BREKKE, Harald (Norway)  
BROADBELT, Winifred M (Netherlands)  
ČIČEROV, Aleksander (Slovenia)  
DA EMPOLI, Domenico (Italy)  
DAVIS-MATTIS, Laleta (Jamaica)  
De SOUZA, Kaiser (Brazil)  
ESCOBAR, Elva (Mexico)  
HOWORTH, Russell (Fiji)  
HYEONG, Kiseong (Korea, Rep. of)  
JARMACHE, Elie (France)  
KALNGUI, Emmanuel (Cameroon)  
KHRAMOV, D Gennadyevich (Russian Federation)  
LOPERA, Eusebio (Spain)  
MADUREIRA, Pedro (Portugal)  
MUBARAK, Hussein (Egypt)  
OKAMOTO, Nobuyuki (Japan)  
OYARZABAL, Mario (Argentina)  
PRZYBYCIN, Andrzej (Poland)  
REICHERT, Christian (Germany)  
RODRIGO, Christian (Chile)  
SUDHAKAR, Maruthadu (India)  
TUHUMWIRE, Joshua (Uganda)  
ZHANG, Haiqi (China)

For the FC, nominations have been received from 15 countries and are as follows:

AUNG, Zaw Minn (Myanmar)  
ARMAS-PFIRTER, Frida Maria (Argentina)  
BAKANOV, Aleksey P. (Russian Federation)  
CHOUDHARY, Pradip K. (India)  
ELLIOT, Tricia (Jamaica)  
GRAZIANI, Francesca (Italy)  
KAVINA, Pavel (Czech Republic)  
LAKI, Duncan M. (Uganda)  
MYKLEBUST, Olav (Norway)  
SÉGURA, Serge (France)  
STORANI, Reinaldo (Brazil)  
WHOMERSLEY, Chris (United Kingdom)  
WILKENS, David C.M. (Germany)

YAMANAKA, Shinichi (Japan)  
YAO, Jinsong (China)

The LTC will meet one week prior to the main session from 4-8 July. Members will review and consider the annual reports of the eight exploration contractors.

For most contractors, 2010 also marks the end of the second five-year phase of the fifteen-year plan of work for exploration under their contracts with the Authority.

Four applications for approval of plans of work for exploration in the Area are also pending consideration by the Commission and the Council. These are as follows:

- Application for a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules in a reserved area submitted by Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. on 10 April 2008.
- Application for a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules in a reserved area submitted by Tonga Ocean Mining Ltd. on 10 April 2008.
- Application for a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic sulphides submitted by China Ocean Minerals Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA) on 7 May 2010.
- Application for a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic sulphides submitted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment of the Russian Federation on 24 December 2010.

As per the applicable Regulations,

these applications must be examined by the Commission, which must then submit its report and recommendations on each application to the Council.

## 17th Session Matters

### • *Assembly*

Matters for consideration by the Assembly at its 17th Session in July include the annual report of the Secretary-General and the election of members of the Finance Committee for the period 2012 to 2016.

### • *Council*

The Council will resume its work on the draft regulations on prospecting and exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Area.

The Council will also be provided with a report on the work of the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) during the session and will take up any matters referred to it by the Commission including consideration of the report and recommendations of the LTC on the four applications for approval of plans of work.

The Council will also review the content of the Advisory Opinion which it had requested the Seabed Disputes Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to render on certain questions relating to the legal responsibilities and obligations of States Parties to the Convention with respect to the sponsorship of activities in the Area, and discuss its implications for the Authority.

# 2011 Publications

The ISA Technical studies are specialized legal and technical reports published on a range of subjects relevant to the work of the Authority.

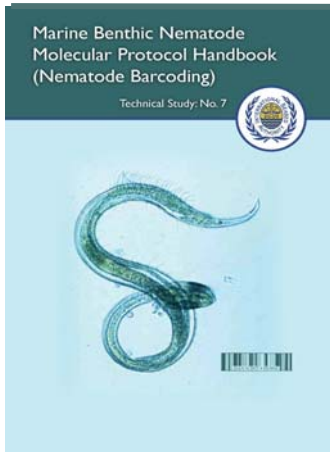
All technical studies are available from the Authority's Satya N Nandan Library.

Electronic copies are available from the Authority's website ([www.isa.org.jm](http://www.isa.org.jm)).

Recently published Technical

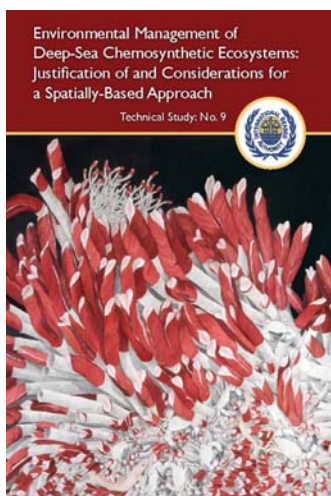
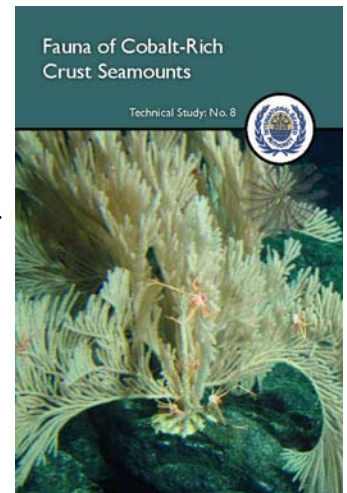
Studies 7, 8, and 9 will be available during the Authority's 17th Session.

Other publications include the Selected Decisions of the 16th Session in English, French and Spanish.



**Technical Study No. 7** This publication is a practical guide for undertaking a molecular survey of deep-sea nematodes including protocols for collecting deep-sea nematodes, preservation and shipping of samples, slide mounting, image capture and the production of individual molecular barcodes. New technologies are discussed such as microarray-based identification systems and massively parallel sequencing (MPS). These future developments could conceivably be integrated into the system presently proposed for even faster and more accurate results. The International Seabed Authority is responsible for protecting the deep-sea environment from damage and excessive exploitation. To succeed in this task, procedures and guidelines have to be implemented for the establishment of environmental baselines.

**Technical Study No. 8** This study was commissioned by the International Seabed Authority to assess patterns of community composition and diversity on seamounts with, and without, cobalt-rich crusts, and the factors that determine these patterns. It provides a considerable advance in the knowledge of the biodiversity of cobalt-rich crusts, and factors that might drive community composition. In particular, data on substrate type can be incorporated, and analyses can extend beyond presence-absence to include abundance. It is important to examine both of these factors in order to confirm the implication of the present study; that there is no effect of crust composition on the fauna. Seamounts in the central-west Pacific Ocean are known to have thick, cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. These are of commercial interest for mining although very little is known about the faunal communities on these seamounts, and in particular whether they could be different from those that occur on seamounts which do not have thick cobalt-rich crusts. Such information is fundamental to evaluating the potential impacts of mining operations, and formulating environmental guidelines for mining operations.



**Technical Study No. 9** This report reviews the basic characteristics of vents and seeps, considers the relative impact of various human activities on vents and seeps, and provides an overview of current and emerging concerns for the management of these ecosystems, including conservation needs and international mandates. Bottom fishing in seep areas and emergent seafloor massive sulphide extraction at vents needs to be addressed as a matter of priority in the context of the spatial management of vent and seep habitats. Extractable resources (for example, mineral, oil, gas, gas hydrate) at vents and seeps are fossil in nature and are therefore non-renewable. Even though mineral deposits can form quickly at vents, commercial ore deposits only accumulate over thousands of years. Oil, gas and gas hydrates at seeps accumulate over millennia. It also presents the first design principles for the comprehensive management of chemosynthetic environments in the global ocean and serves to introduce chemosynthetic ecosystems into the discourse of systematic marine spatial planning.

# ISA Endowment Fund Fellowship Awardees

*Continued from Page 3*

**Mr. Girish Beedessee** is currently working at the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) under the supervision of Dr. Daniel Marie. The title of his project is “Biological activities and properties of extracts derived from invertebrates and microbial communities of hydrothermal vent faunas at the Central Indian Ridge”. He will work with Dr. Ken Takai of JAMSTEC, Japan.

Fascinated by the abundance and diversity of organisms found at hydrothermal vents, and with the possibility of finding novel genes, proteins and molecules which can contribute to interesting biological properties, Mr. Beedessee says the fellowship would provide him with an opportunity to look at the biological properties of invertebrates and microbial symbionts sampled at vent systems of the Central Indian Ridge (CIR).

**Mr. Srinivas Rao** completed his M.Sc. in Physical Oceanography from Andhra University in 2007 and joined as a research scholar under the RIDGE project at the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, India to pursue a Ph.D. in Oceanography, under the guidance of Dr. P. Vethamony and Dr. K.A. Kamesh Raju of NIO. As a part of his work in NIO he has been working on physical properties of the water column over the Indian Ocean Ridge systems. He has also participated in cruises exploring the Carlsberg Ridge and Central Indian Ridge systems to acquire physical oceanography data using CTD, MAPR’s and AUV.

Mr. Srinivas Rao’s proposal is entitled “Distribution of

hydrothermal sources over the slow spreading Indian mid oceanic ridges”, and he will be collaborating with Dr. Edward T. Baker of the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, NOAA, USA. Mr. Rao said the InterRidge/ISA fellowship would give him an opportunity to learn about the processing and interpretation of deep-sea physical oceanography data in relation to hydrothermal plumes/vents and analysing the water column data (with CTD and MAPR) collected during several cruises under the Indian Ridge programme.

**Mr. Sabyasachi Sautya** also studies in the Biological Oceanography Division at NIO, under the supervision of Dr. Baban Ingole. His proposal title is “Exploration of the megabenthic assemblages of the Carlsberg Ridge, Indian Ocean”. The Carlsberg Ridge is a large seabed mountain range in the Indian Ocean, generally rocky with some sediment cover. Recent research has identified possible evidence of vent-derived plumes.

Although little information is available on hard-substratum communities in the deep ocean, particularly in the Indian Ocean, extensive underwater video has been collected from the ridge, which will allow assessment, for the first time, of the variation in the rocky habitats and their biological communities, as well as potential evidence for hydrothermal processes allowing the linking of biological and geological patterns and assessing ecosystem function on the Carlsberg Ridge.

## Metal Prices (www.metalprices.com)



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### July 2011

4-8: Legal and Technical Commission Meetings  
*Kingston*

11-22: 17th Session of the Authority, *Kingston*

## PUBLICATIONS

Selected Decisions of the 16th Session  
English/French/Spanish

ISA Technical Study 6

ISA Technical Study 7.  
Marine Benthic Nematode Molecular Protocol Handbook (Nematode Barcoding)

ISA Technical Study 8.  
Fauna of Cobalt-Rich Ferromanganese Crust Seamounts

ISA Technical Study 9.  
Environmental Management of Deep-Sea Chemosynthetic Ecosystems: Justification of and Considerations for a Spatially-Based Approach

## UPDATES

### MEMBERSHIP

As at 25 May 2011, there were 162 members of the Authority (161 States and the European Union). There are also 141 parties to the 1994 Agreement. In 2010, Angola (10 July) and Malawi (28 September) became parties to the Convention and the Agreement. In 2011, Thailand (15 May 2011) also became party to the Convention and the Agreement.

### PROTOCOL ON THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES

As at 25 May 2011, the number of parties to the Protocol was 32. They are: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Mauritius, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay.

The Secretary-General urges all States which have not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Protocol at the earliest opportunity.

### PERMANENT MISSIONS

Twenty States and the European Union maintain permanent missions to the Authority: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, Cuba, France, Gabon, Germany, Haiti, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Africa, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago.

## ISA Council to continue work on draft regulations for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts

*The ISA Council will continue its work on the draft regulations on prospecting and exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Area at the forthcoming 17th session.*

*The draft set of regulations on prospecting and exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts was submitted to Council by the LTC in 2009. Following discussions, Council agreed then that there were issues that needed to be discussed in more detail relating to the draft regulations including that of the appropriate size and configuration of areas for exploration. The Council also noted that the draft regulations would require further revision in order to bring them into alignment with the text of the Regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides.*

*For the 17th Session, the Secretariat has prepared an informal version of the draft cobalt crusts regulations showing where further consequential revisions would be needed to align the regulations with the regulations on polymetallic sulphides adopted by the Council.*

*The main substantive areas of difference between the regulations on polymetallic sulphides and the draft regulations on cobalt crusts relate to: (a) the question of the size and configuration of the area to be allocated for exploration (regulation 12); and (b) the progressive fee system (regulation 21).*

*The first set of regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules was adopted in 2000.*

## Other News

### Papua New Guinea Ready for Seabed Mining

A major step forward in the development of seabed mining is now in place with the granting of the mining lease to Nautilus Minerals for the development of the Solwara 1 project in the Bismarck Sea in Papua New Guinea.

The mine operation, located 30 kilometres from the coast of New Ireland and at a depth of 1600 metres, is expected to begin by the end of 2013 with the mining of 'high grade' Seafloor Massive Sulphide deposits that contain copper, gold, silver, zinc and lead.

While the project is unique as the world's first seabed mine, the lease arrangements themselves are a reflection of the evolving legislative and regulatory process in Papua New Guinea since the 1970's.

Speaking at the recent Deep Sea Mineral Project workshop in Fiji, Lyndah Brown-Kola of the Papua New Guinea Mineral Resources Authority said the Authority operated in conjunction with the Department of Mineral Policy and Geo-hazards Management who were responsible for setting all mining

policies. She said that the current legislative and regulatory review process ensured that environmental, operational, and financial concerns were addressed.

The PNG Government policy enables the State to acquire up to 30% equity interest in mining projects in PNG. It has set as policy that through its nominated state entity Petromin, it offloads 5% to landowners as royalty. This provides a clear window of transparency in a project, as well as ensuring that the government shares in the profits, whilst responsibly participating in the mining operation through Petromin, which is an independent state commercial entity.

Mrs. Kola-Brown said that the government had been looking at the Solwara I project since 1997 and it granted Nautilus Minerals the first offshore mineral exploration license in 2008.

The PNG Mineral Resources Authority has been working with Nautilus Minerals for 14 years. The company was granted a mining licence this year after 2 years of deliberation over their application.



Lyndah Brown-Kola

### Workshop Sets Platform for Management of Deep Seabed Minerals



Akuila Tawake

A project to address legislative, regulatory, capacity requirements and environmental issues pertaining to deep sea mineral mining for countries in the Pacific region was

launched at a three-day workshop from 6-8 June in Nadi, Fiji.

The Deep Sea Minerals Project, administered by SOPAC, a division of SPC, and funded by EU, is to develop a legislative and regulatory framework for deep-sea mineral mining over a four-year period. Project Team Leader, Akuila Tawake said the framework would help

ensure that sustainable resource management would bring tangible benefits to Pacific Island Countries and their people.

Mr. Tawake said the purpose of the workshop was to help representatives of those countries participating in the Project to better understand issues related to seabed minerals and mining. He said the workshop would allow stakeholders, including representatives of participating countries, to discuss all aspects of the project and work towards an agreement on a way forward for the next four years.

The workshop, a part of the Deep Sea Mineral Project, reflects the growing interest in the region with the first commercial mining lease being granted in Papua New Guinea territorial waters to mine 'high grade' Seafloor Massive

Sulphide (SMS) deposits which include copper, gold, silver, zinc and lead.

This has triggered growing interest in mining deep-sea minerals in the Pacific Region. In addition to SMS, the seabed of the region is abundant in manganese nodules and cobalt-rich crusts.

Presently, eight countries in the region have granted and/or are at various stages of granting exploration licenses but specific policy, legislation and regulations necessary for the control of deep-sea mineral resources are lacking.

Countries that participated in the Project are the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

*The above releases were provided by SOPAC/South Pacific Community.*