



*118th Meeting of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority
5 June 2008*

STATEMENT UPON ELECTION AS SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ISA

Mr President, His Excellency Mr Secretary-General, distinguished delegates, Secretariat staff, Ladies and gentlemen

I wish to thank you very much for the trust and confidence that you have shown in me, by electing me to become the second Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority. It is indeed a singular honour that I will cherish. I hope that with your support and guidance, the Authority will continue to fulfil its mandate to realize the full benefits that are obtainable from the common heritage of mankind.

While many of you have seen my curriculum vitae, I believe that it is necessary to say a few words about myself in order to affirm to you that there will be continuity in the work and policies established by Mr Nandan in his three terms as Secretary-General.

I had the honour to become involved in the work of the Third Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1974 when along with two colleagues at Columbia University; we were requested to prepare a paper on resource assessment of the polymetallic nodule deposits in the Area. Subsequently *Mr Jean-Pierre Levy*, then Chief of the Ocean Economics and Technology Branch of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and now a member of the French delegation recruited me into the United Nations. He provided me with an opportunity to service the First Committee of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea during which, along with colleagues, we prepared background papers for the deliberations of the Committee. At the same time I was afforded an opportunity to work on

other resource and environmental issues related to the marine environment, including the first United Nations meeting/workshop on polymetallic nodules in 1979, ocean energy, coastal erosion, the regional seas programme of UNEP, and the training programmes developed by the International Ocean Institute. I was subsequently made Chief of the Marine minerals section in the Department. I wish to thank Mr Levy for the guidance that he gave me, his confidence in me, the numerous philosophical statements that he used to make such as never take yourself too seriously, and the relative success that he had in smoothening the rough edges at the beginning of my career.

Following the consolidation of all ocean-related offices in the United Nations into one unit under the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of Sea, I then had the opportunity to work under the guidance of His Excellency Ambassador Satya Nandan. Under Ambassador Nandan, I was given a range of assignments with regard to the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, including service as the deputy secretary for Special Commission 3 on the Mining Code for polymetallic nodules in the Area, and Secretary for Special Commission 2 on the Enterprise.

In 1988, Ambassador Nandan assigned me to be the Officer in charge of the United Nations Office for the Law of the Sea here in Kingston. The Office was primarily responsible for organizing the meetings of the Preparatory Commission. In 1990, the Office undertook the work of establishing databases on nodule deposits in pioneer investor areas as well as in the reserved areas. POLYDAT, the name of the databases subsequently became a part of the Authority's Central Data Repository and serves as the base of the Authority's efforts to establish Geologic models of these deposits in the CCZ as well as in the Central Indian Ocean basin.

During the meetings of the Preparatory Commission, I had the opportunity to meet with many individuals who helped to shape my thinking on the work before all of us. A few are still with us and I would like to take this opportunity to thank *Ambassador Hasjim Djalal, Mr Baidy Diene, Mr Coy*

Roache and Professor Domenico Da Empoli, all of whom contributed to the process.

With the entry into force of the Convention, I was requested by the Secretary-General of the Authority to serve as his Deputy, a job that has required administrative and technical skills. I have been the Secretary of the Assembly and Finance Committee during that period, and have also been responsible for many of the workshops convened by the Authority to, inter alia, gather knowledge about the resources and environment of deposition in the Area. These have been challenging areas of work since there is little standardization in the data collected, the sparseness of data and information, and the costs to acquire such data and information. I commend the Secretary-General for the innovative steps he has taken to increase the Authority's knowledge base and will continue in this vein.

In the mining industry, the major objective is to establish what are referred to as ore reserves. In mining, reserves are defined as deposits that under the existing legal, economic and technical conditions can be mined at a profit. In this matrix the Authority is responsible for establishing the legal conditions. Contractors are responsible for ensuring that the technical conditions or the required technology is available, and the market for the mineral commodity determines whether the economic conditions have been met. The Authority serves as the catalyst in creating the right mix. Under Mr Nandan's guidance, the Authority has established an exploration code for nodules, and is in the process of developing such codes for polymetallic sulphides and ferromanganese cobalt-rich crusts. A major achievement of the Authority has been its code for nodule exploration. Confidence in this code is reflected in the applications of Germany, and more recently by private entities sponsored by Nauru and Tonga. With the ever improving economic conditions for nickel, copper, cobalt and manganese, the Authority will have to work toward adopting a code for exploitation or mining of polymetallic nodule deposits in a timely fashion.

The Authority will also have to complete its work on exploration codes for sulphides and crusts, bearing in mind that the security provided by these codes is required by all investors. Under my watch we will continue with these efforts.

Our recent workshop in Chennai has revealed the need for collaboration to make nodule mining from the Area a reality. Many contractors have highlighted their interest to undertake collaborations for technology development. The Authority will make every effort to facilitate such collaborations.

With regard to the protection and preservation of the marine environment, the Authority quickly recognized the dearth of knowledge as concerns the marine biodiversity in the environment of deposition of the mineral resources in the Area. It also recognized that all of the marine mineral deposits in the Area are associated with specific fauna. In relation to polymetallic nodule deposits, it entered into collaboration with leading international scientists to ascertain the biodiversity, species ranges and gene flow in the CCZ. The results of this and future work in this regard will help the Authority to manage impacts for nodule mining in the future. Similar work will also have to be undertaken for polymetallic sulphides deposits and ferromanganese cobalt-rich crusts deposits. It is also hoped that through the participation of scientists from developing countries in such work, the principle of the common heritage of mankind will be in part addressed, in particular since the work will find application in efforts to manage and develop their EEZs.

With the foundation that the Authority has, it is hoped that in the foreseeable future, the Authority can institute an internship programme to generate greater awareness of its work.

Mr President, His Excellency the Secretary-General, distinguished delegates, staff of the Secretariat, ladies and gentlemen, I wish once again to express my gratitude to serve the Authority in the position of Secretary-General and to thank you very much for the confidence that you have in me.

Thank you.