

International Seabed Authority

Press Release

Tenth Session
Kingston, Jamaica
24 May – 4 June 2004



Assembly (AM)
Council (AM)

SB/10/2
24 May 2004

INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY OPENS TENTH KINGSTON SESSION ASSEMBLY AND COUNCIL ELECT PRESIDENTS AND ADOPT AGENDAS

The International Seabed Authority formally began its tenth session in Kingston today, 24 May with its policy-making Assembly and executive Council adopting their agendas and electing their Presidents for the session scheduled to conclude on 4 June.

At the outset of its meeting, the 145-member Assembly elected by acclamation Dennis Francis, High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago to Jamaica and Permanent Representative of his country to the International Seabed Authority, as its President for the session.

Ambassador Francis is a career diplomat and has served as Director of the Division of International Economic Relations, as well as Director of the Division of European Affairs in his country's Foreign Ministry. (A biographical note appears in Press Release SB/10/3). He was nominated by Brazil on behalf of the Latin American and the Caribbean Group.

Election of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to represent each of the regional groups, was deferred to allow delegates time for consultation. The remaining agenda items will be considered later in the session.

The representative of Burkina Faso, an observer to the Authority, announced that his government was preparing to sign the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI (seabed provisions) of the Convention. That would make the land-locked country a full-fledged member of the Authority.

A special session of the Assembly will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, 25 May to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Authority. As part of the celebration, two panel discussions will be held tomorrow and on Wednesday, 26 May on the achievements and future direction and prospects of the International Seabed Authority.

Other items on the Assembly's agenda (ISBA/10/L.1) during the tenth session include the election of the Secretary-General of the Authority, in accordance with article 166, paragraph 2, of the Convention; the election of one half of the members of the Council, in accordance with article 161 of the Convention; and consideration of the annual report of the Secretary-General.

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The Assembly will also approve a supplementary agreement between the Authority and the Government of Jamaica regarding the headquarters of the Authority; and adopt the Authority's budget for the biennium 2005-2006 and the scale of assessment for contributions to the budget.

These items were deferred for consideration later in the session.

The 36-member Council of the Authority, meeting after the adjournment of the Assembly, elected Baidy Diène (Senegal) by acclamation as its President for the session. Mr. Diène, a geological engineer, is Deputy Secretary-General of the Agency for Management and Cooperation between Senegal and Guinea Bissau. His involvement in the issues relating to the Law of the Sea dates back to the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. (A biographical note appears in Press Release SB/10/4). He was nominated by the representative of South Africa, on behalf of the African Group.

Brazil was elected as one of four Vice Presidents of the Council for the session. Brazil was nominated by Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. The other groups asked for more time to confer before submitting their nominees.

In other actions, the Council elected Jean-Marie Auzende (France) to the Legal and Technical Commission to replace Jean-Pierre Lenoble (France) who has resigned. Under the Council's rules of procedure, Mr. Auzende, a marine geologist, will serve the remainder of Mr. Lenoble's term, which ends in 2006.

The Council's agenda include proposing to the Assembly a list of candidates for the election of the Secretary-General and reviewing the supplementary agreement between the Authority and the Government of Jamaica concerning the Authority's headquarters. It will also review the draft regulation on polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich crusts once the Legal and Technical Commission completes work on the text.
