

## **Side Event**

### **High-level political forum on sustainable development**

#### **Ensuring the sustainable management and stewardship of the deep seabed and its resources for the benefit of all humanity**

**13 July 2021**

**Statement by Mr. Jens Frølich Holte**

**State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing my appreciation for the opportunity to speak with you today. The HLFP is the core UN platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs provide the best policy framework and the best action plan for achieving a just, equitable, and sustainable world for all. I am honoured to be invited among these distinguished panelists to address ways to ensure that economic benefits generated by activities in the Area can be shared equitably for the benefit of humanity.

Creating a sustainable ocean economy is one of the ways to achieve this. In December last year, the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, which was initiated by Norway's Prime Minister, presented an ambitious and necessary ocean action agenda for a sustainable ocean economy, where ocean protection, production and prosperity go hand in hand. It is a call for a transformation on how we manage our ocean.

A sustainable ocean economy puts people at its centre, works for everyone, enables human rights, facilitates the equitable distribution of ocean wealth and ensures equality of opportunity for all. This has to be the yardstick against which activities in the Area must be measured.

Norway is highly committed to the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, nationally and internationally, and in cooperation with other member states. The Norwegian Prime Minister Solberg is engaged as Co-Chair, with the president of Ghana, of the UN Secretary-General's SDG Advocacy Group. Norway has also been committed to the International Seabed Authority ever since its inception. We are proud to have been part of an effort that has already achieved astonishing results.

All 17 SDGs are of relevance to the work of ISA. ISA's ultimate goal is the protection and development of deep-sea resources in ways that benefit humanity as a whole, and irrespective of the geographical location of the States, whether coastal or landlocked. ISA's implementation of this goal contributes to poverty eradication through revenue distribution (SDG 1), the creation of decent work and economic growth through regulatory regimes covering health, safety and working conditions (SDG 8), and the reduction of inequalities through benefit-sharing arrangements (SDG 10).

The mandate and commitment of the ISA to implement the economic, social and environmental mandates assigned to it by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

(UNCLOS) and the 1994 Agreement, correspond well with Norway's commitment to empower states to take advantage of the opportunities open under UNCLOS to improve development.

The collective global effort to achieve the SDGs is the starting point for all Norway's development policy. Through our development assistance, we encourage cooperation and partnership between states that are in different stages of economic development and thus have unequal opportunities to thrive in this field, both at the regional and global level. Together, we need to build the necessary capacity and infrastructure, share marine scientific data, engage in collaborative research and training programmes to ensure that benefits from the deep-seabed are indeed shared in a sustainable manner.

To date, 31 contracts for exploration in the Area have been granted to 22 different sponsoring States, including 12 developing States and 6 Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This shows that with all the technological advantages held by richer nations, the processes overseen by ISA have led to a majority of sponsoring States being developing countries.

The transition to low-carbon societies and economies is driving much of the increased need for critical minerals. Mineral supply problems is a potential obstacle to the fulfilment of the SDG 13 targets needed to keep the world on a climate-safe trajectory. As the High-level Panel has underlined, deep-seabed mining, if managed properly and based on the precautionary principle and in compliance with robust environmental standards, may contribute to a green and inclusive economic development. Setting comprehensive rules, regulations and procedures that contractors must comply with, which is at the heart of ISA's work, is a precondition to achieving SDG 14.

Success in this endeavour will not only lead to a regime that ensures conservation and sustainable use of resources that should be shared by all for the benefit of all; it will also show the world that international cooperation based on mutual respect and benefit is possible. Rest assured that Norway is a consistent partner and that we will continue to assist in building capacity and competence in areas where we have particular expertise.

Thank you.