



INFORMAL NOTE ON MATTERS BEFORE THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

9 – 20 July 2007, Kingston, Jamaica

1. This information note has been prepared to facilitate the work of the Authority at its forthcoming session from 9 to 20 July 2007. The note identifies the matters that are to be considered by the Assembly, Council, Legal and Technical Commission and Finance Committee. The proposed schedule of meetings is also attached with this note.

2. It should be noted that, in accordance with the Convention and the Agreement, a number of substantive matters have to be sequentially considered by different organs of the Authority before a final decision on them can be taken. The schedule of meetings for the various organs, which is attached with this note, has therefore been designed with this consideration in mind.

I. OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

3. 2007 is not a budget year and no elections to any of the organs of the Authority are scheduled other than occasional vacancies arising due to the resignation of individual members of the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission. The emphasis of the thirteenth session will therefore be on the substantive work of the Authority with respect to the draft regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. Draft regulations on polymetallic sulphides will be taken up by the Council. The incoming Legal and Technical Commission will consider the draft regulations on cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. The Assembly will consider the annual report of the Secretary-General. It will also consider the reports and recommendations of the Council and the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will consider a detailed proposal by the Secretary-General relating to the guidelines and procedures for the use of the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund.

4. It is the turn of the African Group to nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Assembly. It is the turn of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Council.

II. FINANCE COMMITTEE

5. In 2006, the Assembly decided to establish the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area (ISBA/12/A/11). Pursuant to the resolution establishing the Fund, the purposes of the Fund shall be to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole, in particular by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programmes and by providing them with opportunities to participate in international technical and scientific cooperation, including through training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes. The Assembly had also requested the Secretary-General to prepare for consideration by the Council and Assembly in 2007 detailed rules and procedures for the administration and utilization of the Fund.

6. As requested by the Assembly, the Secretary-General has prepared draft terms of reference, guidelines and procedures for the use of the Fund. These will be considered by the

Finance Committee prior to their submission to the Council and Assembly for approval. The Finance Committee will also receive a report on the status of the Fund.

7. The Finance Committee will also consider the audit report for 2006.

III. LEGAL AND TECHNICAL COMMISSION

8. The Legal and Technical Commission is meeting for the first time since the election of new members of the Commission in 2006.

9. The Commission will review and consider the annual reports of contractors, submitted pursuant to the regulations for prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules in the Area.

10. The main item of business for the Commission will be to consider the revised draft regulations relating to cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts (ISBA/13/LTC/WP.1). The revised draft regulations are submitted to the Commission following the decision of the Council at the twelfth session in 2006 to prepare separate sets of regulations for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich crusts. In light of that decision, the Secretariat revised the original draft regulations contained in document ISBA/10/C/WP.1/Rev.1* (which dealt with both polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich crusts) to produce two separate documents.

11. The revised draft regulations are based on document ISBA/10/C/WP.1/Rev.1* with technical adjustments consistent with the recommendations that emerged from the discussions during the Authority's workshop on technical and economic considerations relating to mining polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich crusts in the Area held from 31 July to 4 August 2006. An explanatory memorandum has been prepared to assist the Legal and Technical Commission in its deliberations (ISBA/13/LTC/1).

IV. COUNCIL

12. The first item of business for the Council will be the election of a President and vice-Presidents, followed by the adoption of the agenda for the thirteenth session.

13. The main item of business for the Council will be to consider the revised draft regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides following its decision at the twelfth session in 2006 to prepare separate sets of regulations for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich crusts. As noted in paragraph 9, in light of that decision, the Secretariat revised the original draft regulations contained in document ISBA/10/C/WP.1/Rev.1* (which dealt with both polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich crusts) to produce two separate documents. In so doing, the Secretariat also, as requested by the Council, revised the draft regulations further in the light of the presentations, proposals and discussions in the Council during the twelfth session.

14. In accordance with the Council's request, the Secretariat prepared a set of draft sulphides regulations in October 2006. Also in accordance with the Council's request, the draft was circulated to outgoing members of the Legal and Technical Commission in the same month. By the requested date of 31 December, comments had been received from three members of the Commission. The substance of these comments is referred to in the working paper on the draft regulations prepared for the Council's consideration during the thirteenth session (ISBA/13/C/WP.1). This, together with the technical papers and analyses previously made available to the Council can be accessed through the Authority's website at <http://www.isa.org.jm>.

15. In light of its decision in 2006, without prejudice to future elections, to increase the size of the Legal and Technical Commission to 25 members, the Council had also requested the Secretary-General to prepare for its consideration a report on the future size and composition of the Legal and Technical Commission and the process for future elections. Such a report will be produced in due course prior to the session. It can be recalled that the next election of all members of the Commission will be held in 2011.

V. ASSEMBLY

16. The first item of business for the Assembly will be the election of a President and vice-Presidents, followed by the adoption of the agenda for the thirteenth session.

17. As required by article 166, paragraph 4, of the Convention, the Secretary-General will present his annual report to the Assembly for its consideration. The report will describe the work of the Authority since the twelfth session and will indicate the main trends of the future work programme for the Secretariat.

18. The Assembly will also consider such other proposals and recommendations that may be referred to it by the other organs and subsidiary bodies of the Authority.

*Kingston, Jamaica
26 April 2007*