



# INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

26 October 2016

Dear Members of the Legal and Technical Commission,

Congratulations on your election to the Legal and Technical Commission for the period 2017 to 2021.

The Secretariat has put together this briefing note to prepare those of you who will be attending meetings of the Commission for the first time and as a useful reminder for those who are returning to the Commission.

This note provides practical information on the following:

- Meeting arrangements
  - Access to documents
  - Commission Secure Website
  - *Satya N. Nandan* Library
  - Transportation and accommodation
- Travel assistance
  - Financial assistance for members from developing countries
  - Visas to Jamaica
- Status of members and confidentiality obligations

## **Meeting arrangements**

Since 2013, the Commission has adopted a practice of meeting twice a year. Meetings usually take place in February and in July. The latter takes place with meetings of other organs of the Authority during the annual session. Meetings are held at the Jamaica Conference Center, in the vicinity of the Secretariat. Free WiFi is available for the duration of the meeting. Normal meeting hours (times during which interpretation services are available) are 10 am to 1 pm and 3 pm to 6 pm.

You will be provided with a photo ID pass valid for the duration of your term of office. This will be issued by the Security and Transportation Service.

## **Access to documents**

Official documents and other materials for the Commission are available on the ISA [website](http://www.isa.org.jm). Official documents are issued in the six official languages of the Authority (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). Documents other than official documents and other background materials will normally only be available in one of the working languages of the Authority, which are English and French.



The Secretariat uses the **PaperSmart** system in order to provide easy electronic access to documents. You are strongly encouraged to carry your laptops, tablets and other mobile devices to access documents. Requests for prints can be made at the dedicated print-on-demand desk set up in the conference room.

#### Commission Secure Website

Given the confidential nature of many of the materials, data and documents that will be considered by the Commission, the Secretariat has created a secure website (ftp site) for use exclusively by members of the Commission. You will be issued with a unique isa.org.jm address and a password to use as your personal credentials to enter the [ftp site](#). New members of the Commission are invited to request their individual credentials by emailing Anna Elaise ([annae@isa.org.jm](mailto:annae@isa.org.jm)). Credentials with instructions for using the website will be sent under a separate email to their registered email address. Credentials must not be given to any other person.

#### Satya N. Nandan Library

While attending Commission meetings, you are welcome to visit the *Satya N. Nandan* Library located on the first floor of the Secretariat. The specialised library has, over the years, become a source of reference for scientific and legal material relevant to activities in the deep seabed area and the international law of the sea in general. The Library also provides access to a number of electronic resources and services which include WiFi access, computer workstations and printer, online databases, E-Books, and catalogues. For any resources or research needs, or further information, please contact the librarian, Michelle Bond ([mbond@isa.org.jm](mailto:mbond@isa.org.jm)).

#### Transportation and accommodation

The Secretariat will organize daily transportation to and from the meetings of the Commission. For logistics purposes, you are requested to provide your arrival details in advance to Ghislain Maertens ([gmaertens@isa.org.jm](mailto:gmaertens@isa.org.jm)) to enable the organizing of airport transfers to the hotels.

Please also note that you are responsible for making your own hotel bookings or accommodation arrangements. Negotiated rates at major hotels will be listed on the [Legal and Technical Commission page](#) of the Authority's website and will also be emailed to you once the information is available. To take advantage of these rates, you will need to mention at the time of booking, that you are a member of the Legal and Technical Commission of the Authority.

A welcome package listing further details on security, taxi services, daily shuttles to and from the Jamaica Conference Centre, restaurants, medical services and emergency contacts will be sent out in advance of meetings.



## **Travel assistance**

### **Financial assistance for members from developing countries**

The Secretariat has access to limited funds, in the form of a voluntary trust fund, to assist members of the Commission from developing countries to participate in the meetings of the Commission. To access funding, a formal request must be made by the member's government to the Secretary-General of the Authority no later than three months in advance of the opening of the meeting. The request must indicate why the costs of participation cannot be met by the nominating government. For example, for the meeting of the Commission to be held in February 2017, the formal request should be received by the Secretary-General no later than November 21, 2016.

Financial assistance from the voluntary trust fund covers economy airfare from the individual's home to Kingston by the most economical and direct route. Daily subsistence allowance may be paid only in exceptional cases. The Secretary-General will inform the government concerned of the outcome of the request no later than two months in advance of the opening of the meeting.

### **Visas to Jamaica**

You are encouraged to obtain visas for Jamaica (if required) prior to travel in your country of residence. In the event Jamaica has no representation in your country, please contact the Secretariat so that arrangements can be made for the issuance of a visa waiver for travel to Jamaica. Visa waivers normally take 15 business days for processing. To that end, please be reminded that it is your responsibility to apply and obtain transit visas for travel. Should you need a letter of invitation, the Secretariat will be pleased to issue one, upon request, to facilitate this process.

## **Status of members and confidentiality obligations**

As a member of the Legal and Technical Commission, you serve in your personal capacity. When attending meetings of the Commission, and travelling to and from such meetings, you are considered experts on mission and accorded such privileges and immunities, including immunity from legal process in respect of words spoken or written and acts done in the exercise of your functions, as are necessary for the independent exercise of your functions. These functions are set out mainly in article 165 of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Members of the Commission are also bound by certain obligations. There is a total prohibition against any financial interest concerning any activity relating to the exploration or exploitation of marine minerals in the Area, whilst there is an obligation to make a disclosure in respect of any interest in any matter under discussion in the Commission. Furthermore, members must not disclose any industrial secret, proprietary data and information made accessible to them by reason of their duties as a member of the Commission. The latter obligation continues even beyond the term of office.



Upon taking office, members will be required to sign a declaration acknowledging these obligations and committing to performing her or his duties honourably, faithfully, impartially and conscientiously. The obligations imposed on members of the Commission are personal obligations. In case of any doubt as to what may constitute a financial interest, or what type of interest may require disclosure, members are advised to seek professional advice. They may also consult, on a confidential basis, with the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat.

As far as confidential data and information are concerned, the Secretary-General has promulgated internal procedures ([ISBA/ST/SGB/2011/03](#), Annex II) governing the handling of such data and information. By decision of the Council, these also apply to members of the Commission and you are urged to familiarize yourself with these procedures.

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