

**International Seabed Authority: 24<sup>th</sup> Assembly session**  
**Tuesday 24 July 2018**  
**Agenda item 7: Report of the Secretary-General**

## **Statement of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ)**

Thank you, President.

It is my honour to make this statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and my own country New Zealand.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General and the staff of the International Seabed Authority Secretariat for providing us once again with a helpful annual report. We also thank the Government of Jamaica for its hospitality and continued support of the Authority.

We are pleased with the progress the Legal and Technical Commission (the Commission) has made in the development of the exploitation regulations. We continue to urge the Commission to proceed with caution, based on science, to manage the mineral resources of the Area while ensuring that the marine environment is protected from any harmful effects of mining related activities.

In this regard, we would like to extend out thanks to the Commission for preparing a revised draft of the exploitation regulations. We are pleased to see that the structure of the draft has improved and we welcome the initial progress made on the environmental sections. We continue to encourage the Commission to improve the environmental aspects of the exploitation regulations and to consider the transition between the exploration and exploitation phases. The marine environment is one that we still do not fully understand and we therefore must remain flexible to respond to advances in our scientific understanding, including through the use of adaptive management mechanisms. Further consideration will also need to be given to how the exploitation regulations will take into account other users of the marine environment, to ensure that reasonable regard is given to activities such as fisheries and the laying and maintenance of submarine cables. It is of critical importance that the exploitation regulations provide sufficient protections for the marine environment, and accurately reflect UNCLOS.

Various Guidelines and Standards are referred to in the revised draft and we stress that these will need to be developed in parallel with the exploitation regulations. Furthermore, as the regulations take shape we will need to ensure that the Authority has the necessary regulatory functions and capacity to verify compliance with the regulations, including the environmental obligations, to ensure that there are consequences for any breaches, and to act swiftly, and even pre-emptively if necessary, to protect our shared marine environment.

In addition to the Commission's required work on the exploitation regulations, the Finance Committee will need to continue work on matters that are in their purview such as the determination of administrative and fixed fees and performance guarantees. The development of equitable sharing criteria for economic benefits from exploitation activities in the Area as well as payments arising from Article 82 will also need to continue.

We are pleased that the workshop to review the implementation of the Regional Environmental Management Plan for the Clarion Clipperton Zone will take place later this year. We see this review as being essential for the good management of the marine environment in the Area, which is a core function of the Authority, and welcome the initiative of the Commission to apply lessons learned to the development of additional Regional Environmental Management Plans.

At a time when the Authority is facing a mounting workload, we need to ensure the working methods of the Council assist the Authority's overall efficiency and effectiveness. CANZ continues to consider how to improve the Authority's institutions and working methods. We note our support for the measures already underway to respond to the Article 154 review. In this regard we welcome the initiative of the German Proposal and the proposed improvements to the processes of the Authority's work.

Furthermore, we welcome the draft strategic plan developed by the Secretary-General for the work of the Authority for the 2019-2020 period, as requested by the Assembly last year in its decision on the Article 154 review. We see the strategic plan as vital in ensuring the organs of the Authority work in a focused, efficient and prioritised manner going forward.

Finally, CANZ welcomes the Council's continued efforts to be clearer about what it expects from the Secretariat, the Commission and contractors. We think it is useful for the Council to set out its expectations (including timeframes) in a decision, as has occurred over the past few years. We would also like to express our appreciation for the Secretary General's report on the Council's decision in 2017 regarding the Commission's priorities and programme of work. We consider that this practice increases transparency and assists in building the Authority's institutional memory and we would welcome further such reports in future.

Thank you.