

Thank you Mr. President. Since it is the first time the Czech Republic is taking the floor at the meeting of the Assembly, let me to congratulate you on your election and assure you of our full cooperation.

The Czech Republic would like to thank the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority for his report. We were pleased to notice that the momentum of the International Seabed Authority is being maintained in such a satisfactory manner. Let me to provide you only with a few comments on behalf of my delegation.

First, regarding financial matters let me to note that there is an urgent need to deal with the outstanding contributions. It is an important issue for the functioning of the Authority to assure that the budget does not suffer from lack of contributions. We therefore urge member States to pay the assess contributions on time. We are of the opinion that there is a space for chairs of regional groups to be more active in this regard. We express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his active efforts to find a solution.

Secondly, we are pleased to see that the question of applications for extension of approved plans of work of exploration is being duly considered. Since we are approaching the exploitation phase it is necessary to take into account all matter-related issues. From the vast variety let me to mention the need for proper development of the Exploitation Code. We would be ready to submit our comments on the report of working draft Regulations and Standard Contract Terms on Exploitation for Mineral Resources in the Area by 2 November 2016.

Last, but not least, let me to acknowledge the importance of workshops and seminars that are being held with a view to promote and encourage marine scientific research. They are a valued platform for collaboration with contractors and the international scientific community. In the same direction, we welcome all initiatives aimed at explaining the work of the Authority – in this regard it was very helpful, and it was a great pleasure, to welcome the Secretary-General in the Central Europe, namely the Czech Republic and Poland in January this year, as well as his participation at the seminar for contractors organized by the Interoceanmetal, an intergovernmental organization the Czech Republic is a member.

I thank you.