



REPUBLIC OF FIJI

**STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE
22nd SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY (ISA)**
Kingston Jamaica – 20 July, 2016

**Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. At the outset, my delegation wishes to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Assembly for this 22nd Session of the International Seabed Authority (ISA). We also appreciate the efforts of the former President during the 21st session. My delegation wishes to thank the Government and people of Jamaica for their hospitality and the facilitation for this 22nd session of the Authority.
2. We also thank the Secretary General of the Authority for his leadership and commend the Secretariat for their tireless work.

Mr. President,

3. The report presented by the Secretary General provides a comprehensive overview of the Authority's work over the past year. We welcome the progress that has been achieved thus far.

4. We express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat, members of the Authority, organizations and individuals for the generous donations to the 'Satya Nandan Library'. We recognize the valuable contribution that the library will provide to our work-plans in the future.
5. With regards to the Voluntary Trust Fund, my delegation sincerely appreciates the continuous support by members of the Authority for their generous contribution. We also encourage other parties to make similar contributions to the Trust Fund. These funds will greatly assist developing states such as SIDS and LDCs in participating at scheduled meetings of the Authority.
6. On Capacity Building, we recognize and acknowledge the work already undertaken by the Authority. To ensure long-term return on training and capacity building investment, it is important that member states put in place mechanisms that allow them to draw on the developed expertise of such officers. It also requires that capacity building programmes are well-planned out for the benefit of all concerned.
7. On the status of exploration and exploitation in the Area, our view is that any future contracts should be issued only if we are satisfied as to world demand for the minerals in question and are assured as to the environmental integrity and implications on marine biodiversity of the proposed activities. Taking into consideration that there is still a lot unknown in the Area, full exercise of the precautionary principle should be observed if there is a lack of scientific information and data. Rather than establishing environmental protection zones in the Area as we've done in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, we should view the whole Area as a Marine Protected Area.

8. Fiji believes that the Exploitation Regulations must be the Authority's primary focus at this time. This Regulation needs to be in place before the extended exploration contracts come to an end.

Mr. President,

9. An important element to be factored into the Authority's work programme for the current and future sessions is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, the Authority is expected to be actively involved in the implementation of Goal 14 of the SDGs. To that end, we recall UNGA resolution 70/226 of 22 December 2015, where the General Assembly mandated the convening of a United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14, to be held in Fiji from 5 – 9 June, 2017. The conference will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to come together to learn more (the truth) about the current state of the ocean, and what needs to be done to ensure that we reverse the current cycle of decline in the oceans' health, be it through increasing marine pollution, declining fish-stocks or ocean acidification and ocean-warming.
10. As Co-hosts with the Government of Sweden for the 2017 Conference, may I say that in the light of the ISA's responsibilities, it is expected the Authority will play a full and constructive role in the conference and its outcomes.
11. We are committed to doing our part by identifying innovative ways to increase coordination; cooperation and partnerships; increase public awareness of the status of the Ocean in terms of all UN Ocean processes; and involve more participation by relevant stakeholders. We look forward to seeing you as many of you as possible in Fiji next year at the Conference.

I thank you.