

## **STATEMENT OF INDIA**

**On Item 7 (Dated 24.7.2018)**

### **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL, INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY AT ITS 24<sup>th</sup> SESSION**

Mr. President,

1. My delegation congratulates the Secretary General for bringing out a very comprehensive report covering various issues.
2. Before we state our position with regard to the Secretary General's report, We wish to place on record our appreciation for the good work done during the twenty third Assembly under the Presidentship of Mr Muinga from Republic of Mozambique for his stewardship, able leadership and guidance for smooth conduct of the Assembly during 2017. He has been our great friend for more than a decade and participated jointly in meetings of ISA and BBNJ.
3. We note with interest the introduction of the Secretary General, that the Authority has a number of other obligations under the UNCLOS, including the obligation to distribute to State parties payments or contributions in kind derived from the exploitation of the resources of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles, pursuant to article 82, paragraph 4, of the Convention. We need to realise this aspect through continuous dialogue and concerted efforts.
4. We are making strides to realise some of these obligations, with the draft regulations of mineral resources tabled before the various organs of the Authority for their active consideration. We are going through a phase of challenging issues and reminds us of our responsibility to draft such regulations that balances with the sustainable environment and harvesting of mineral resources, which we describe as "Responsible Mining". However, the current market situation, the available technology do not allow many of the Contractors to proceed for mining in near future. The Authority's preparedness to deal with any application for contract of exploitation of any mineral resources is a welcome step.
5. My delegation gives utmost importance to the symbiotic relationship of the Contractors and the Authority. It is our endeavour to ensure that such a relationship is not eroded during the course of negotiating various issues and therefore suggest to strike a delicate balance between various Contractors and Member States including other stake holders that have interest in deep-sea bed and its resources. We need to continue our conversation for maintaining the symbiotic relationship and implement

such measures to encourage the contractors to work for the benefit of the Authority.

6. As you would appreciate and through your indulgence we wish to reiterate the position of India with respect to the Oceans and the Law of the Sea. India attaches significant importance to the UN Convention on Law of the Sea and the 1994 agreement on Part XI of the Convention by virtue of which the International Seabed Authority was established. The Common Heritage of Mankind has been the underlying principle behind the Convention and the Authority to which India is remains closely associated and always been adhering to the basic principle. It is this principle, Mr. President, that has led to significant expansion of International Seabed Authority and its activities over the last two decades in almost all spheres and bringing in the regulatory frame work of all the known mineral resources on the seabed beyond national jurisdiction. The rapid progress is seen in the activities of the Authority through the present count of 29 contracts in all oceans and regulations for three mineral resources known on the seabed in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The wide participation of developing states and the claims of reserved areas by the Small Island nations in Pacific set the tone for the realisation of one of the important aspects of “Common Heritage of Mankind”. The expanded number of States parties to the Convention to 168 who are also the ipso facto members of the Authority reflects the growing membership of the Authority. It is significant to note that 150 countries are party to Part XI implementation agreement 1994.
7. It is noteworthy to mention here that the Authority has far-reaching obligations, responsibilities, rules, regulations and procedures to protect the marine environment. The Authority’s efforts in conducting a series of workshops with a shifting focuss from time to time in this regard is well appreciated. Our delegation expect that the outcomes of the workshops would lead to development of standardization procedures. This is also important in the context of foregone deliberations in the United Nations about the biodiversity beyond the areas of national jurisdiction and the negotiations therein scheduled in September 2018.
8. Mr President, My delegation is given to understand that the Secretariat is making efforts to conduct a workshop for the first time in the theme of “Metallurgy of Polymetallic Nodules, during the next quarter, which is a welcome step and a very important component of the exploitation, finally leads from resource to ore to metal.
9. The Authority reaching digital space during the recent years and the progress made is commendable. The online access to information, digital publications and official documents through Authority website, as well as

mobile application, Twitter and Facebook accounts of the Authority provides greater awareness of Authorities' work. The efforts of the secretariat in initiatives aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and dialogue among member states, contractors, NGOs and other stake holders of the international seabed area deserves appreciation.

10. India commends the efforts of the Authority and its arm, the LTC, in formulating the various aspects related to the development of mining code. We stand to contribute to draft exploitation regulations being one of first four Pioneer Investors, the developing country and the only in Indian Ocean for Polymetallic Nodules and having recently celebrated 50 years of the First International Indian Ocean Expedition and drawn plans for the Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2). As a matter of fact, we have the involvement of many countries and institutes that have forged their interest to work in all aspects of ocean sciences in Indian Ocean.
11. My delegation wish to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman, LTC, Finance Committee and its Members for excellent work, and appreciate the efforts the President of Council who skilfully conducted the proceedings and pronounced his recommendations to the Assembly, the report of which is awaited by us for further deliberations. Thanks to the Secretariat, the interpreters and the security for their total commitment and involvement in the smooth conduct of the Authority's work.
12. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Government of Jamaica for their kind hospitality extended for this important annual event and making us comfortable during our stay.

Mr. President.

My delegation noted with interest the details as provided in the Secretary General's report regarding the ISA relationship with United Nations and other relevant international organisations, regarding the promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area, and capacity development and training. My delegation would like to avail this opportunity to inform distinguished delegates that India is hosting an on-land training program under its contract on polymetallic sulphides. The advertisement for this training is already available on the Authority's webpage.

13. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Government of Jamaica for their kind hospitality extended for this important annual event and making us comfortable during our stay.

Mr President,

We wish to end our statement with a note from our ancient scriptures dating back to 6000 BC, where it is stated in Sanskrit, a phrase "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", a philosophy that inculcates an understanding that "the whole world is one family", which is an emblem of multiculturalism and universalism that translates into "Common Heritage of Mankind". It is also important for us to share with the distinguished delegates present in this Assembly that ancient scriptures of our country called "Vedas" have several references in them on environmental protection, ecological balance, weather cycles, rainfall phenomena, hydrologic cycle and related subjects that directly indicate the high level awareness then and the guidance for sustainable future of the "Mother Earth.

Mr President

We thank all distinguished delegates for their patience and kind attention. Wish you all a fruitful deliberations during this week and useful outcome of this 24<sup>th</sup> session of ISA.