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## **Report of the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority under article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**

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## I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the Assembly of the Authority pursuant to article 166, paragraph 4, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“the Convention”). The report provides information on the work of the Authority during the period from July 2016 to May 2017.

2. The Authority is an autonomous international organization established under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“the 1994 Agreement”). It is the organization through which States parties to the Convention, in accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, organize and control activities in the Area, in particular with a view to administering the resources of the Area.

3. The Authority has a number of other specific responsibilities under the Convention, such as the responsibility to distribute to States parties to the Convention payments or contributions in kind derived from exploitation of the resources of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles, pursuant to article 82, paragraph 4, of the Convention, and the responsibility, under articles 209 and 145, to establish international rules, regulations and procedures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from activities in the Area and to adopt measures to protect and conserve the natural resources of the Area and prevent damage to the flora and fauna of the marine environment.

4. Pending the approval of the first plan of work for exploitation, the Authority is to concentrate on the 11 areas of work listed in paragraph 5 of section 1 of the annex to the 1994 Agreement. The main focus is on the following areas:

(a) Processing of applications for approval of plans of work for exploration and supervisory functions with regard to contracts for exploration;

(b) Adoption of rules, regulations and procedures necessary for the conduct of activities in the Area and development of an appropriate regulatory framework for the future exploitation of the mineral resources in the Area, including applicable standards for the protection and preservation of the marine environment;

(c) Monitoring of trends and developments relating to deep seabed mining activities, including world metal market conditions and metal prices, trends and prospects;

(d) Promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area through, among other things, a continuing programme of technical workshops, the dissemination of the results of such research and collaboration with contractors and the international scientific community;

(e) Information-gathering and the establishment and development of unique databases of scientific and technical information, with a view to obtaining a better understanding of the deep ocean environment.

5. During the reporting period, the Authority continued its work on the development of the framework for future exploitation of mineral resources of the Area. In particular, the Authority achieved progress with regard to the priority deliverables for the development of the exploitation code, as endorsed by the Council of the International Seabed Authority during its twenty-second session of the Authority (see [ISBA/22/C/28](#) and [ISBA/22/C/17](#), annex II).

6. On 1 January 2017, Michael W. Lodge (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) assumed office as the Secretary-General of the Authority, succeeding Nii Allotey Odunton (Ghana).

## II. Periodic review of the International Seabed Authority pursuant to article 154 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

7. In its decision [ISBA/21/A/9/Rev.1](#) of 24 July 2015, the Assembly decided to undertake, pursuant to article 154 of the Convention, a general and systematic review of the manner in which the international regime of the Area established in the Convention has operated in practice. The Assembly also decided that such a review should be carried out under the oversight of a Review Committee comprising the President and the Bureau of the Assembly and the President of the Council of the Authority, with the President of the twenty-first session of the Assembly (Helmut Tuerk (Austria)) remaining a member of the Review Committee until the completion of the review, and that the Chairs of the regional groups might also participate as observers in the Review Committee. The Assembly further decided that the review should be conducted by independent consultants appointed by the Review Committee on the basis of a short list of qualified consultants prepared by the Secretary-General of the Authority, according to the established procurement procedures of the Authority.

8. The Assembly considered the interim report of the Review Committee at its twenty-second session, in 2016. In its decision [ISBA/22/A/11](#), the Assembly took note of the interim report and decided to provide States parties, observers and stakeholders a further opportunity to submit written observations on the interim report, and the comments thereto, before 15 October 2016, including, if they had not done so, the opportunity to reply to the questionnaire drawn up by the authors of the review, Seascope Consultants Limited. The Secretary-General was requested to transmit the draft final report, as approved by the Review Committee, to States parties and observers before 15 April 2017.

9. The Review Committee held its final meeting in Kingston from 30 January to 3 February 2017. On 3 February 2017, the Chair of the Review Committee transmitted its final report to the Secretary-General and requested him to circulate the report to States parties and observers of the Authority. The final report of the Review Committee, which contains 19 recommendations, appears as an annex to document [ISBA/23/A/3](#). In May 2017, the Secretary-General issued document [ISBA/23/A/5](#), containing the comments of the secretariat on the recommendations of the Review Committee.

## III. The Area

10. In the Convention, the Area is defined as the seabed and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. That means that the establishment of the exact geographic limits of the Area depends on the establishment of the limits of national jurisdiction, including the delineation of the continental shelf extending beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline of the territorial sea. For that reason, pursuant to article 84, paragraph 2, of the Convention, coastal States are obliged to give due publicity to charts or lists of geographical coordinates of points and, in the case of those indicating the outer limit lines of the continental shelf, to deposit a copy of such charts or lists with the Secretary-General of the Authority.

11. On 29 August 2016, Pakistan deposited a copy of its chart indicating the outer limit lines of the continental shelf of Pakistan along with lists of coordinates. As at 31 May 2017, seven members of the Authority have deposited such charts and lists with the Secretary-General, namely, Australia, France (with respect to Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, New Caledonia, and the Kerguelen Islands), Ireland,

Mexico, Niue, Pakistan and the Philippines. The Secretary-General takes the opportunity to urge all coastal States to deposit such charts or lists of coordinates as soon as possible after the establishment of the outer limit lines of their continental shelf, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention.

#### **IV. Membership of the Authority**

12. In accordance with article 156, paragraph 2, of the Convention, all States parties to the Convention are, ipso facto, members of the Authority. Azerbaijan acceded to the Convention on 16 June 2016. On 23 September 2016, Ghana became a party to the 1994 Agreement. As at 31 May 2017, there were 168 parties to the Convention (167 States and the European Union) and thus 168 members of the Authority. On the same date, there were 150 parties to the 1994 Agreement.

13. There are 18 members of the Authority that became parties to the Convention before the adoption of the 1994 Agreement that have yet to become parties to the Agreement, namely, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Mali, Marshall Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia and the Sudan.

14. As provided by General Assembly resolution [48/263](#) and the 1994 Agreement itself, the provisions of the 1994 Agreement and Part XI of the Convention are to be interpreted and applied together as a single instrument. In the event of any inconsistency between the 1994 Agreement and Part XI of the Convention, the provisions of the 1994 Agreement would prevail. Although members of the Authority that are not parties to the 1994 Agreement necessarily participate in the work of the Authority under arrangements based on that Agreement, becoming a party to the 1994 Agreement would remove any incongruity that currently exists for those States. In paragraph 3 of its resolution [71/257](#), the General Assembly of the United Nations called upon all States that have not done so to become parties to the Convention and the 1994 Agreement.

15. Each year, the Secretary-General of the Authority issues a reminder to those States that are not yet party to the 1994 Agreement, urging them to become parties at the earliest opportunity. The last such note was circulated on 8 March 2017.

#### **V. Permanent missions to the Authority**

16. As at 31 May 2017, the following 25 States, in addition to the European Union, maintained permanent missions to the Authority: Algeria, Argentina, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, Cuba, France, Gabon, Germany, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Africa, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago.

#### **VI. Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority**

17. The Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority was adopted by consensus at the fourth session of the Assembly, on 26 March 1998 (see [ISBA/4/A/8](#)). In accordance with article 18 of the Protocol, it entered into force 30 days after the date of deposit of the tenth instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession, on 31 March 2003.

18. The Protocol deals with the privileges and immunities of the Authority in relation to those matters that are not already covered in the Convention (articles 176 to 183) and is based substantially on articles I, II, IV, V, VI and VII of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13 February 1946. The Protocol, *inter alia*, provides essential protection to representatives of members of the Authority who attend meetings of the Authority or who travel to and from those meetings. It also accords to experts on mission for the Authority such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions, while on mission, and for the time spent on journeys in connection with their mission.

19. During the past year, two States acceded to the Protocol: Ghana (23 September 2016) and Senegal (11 July 2016). That brings the total number of parties to 42, namely, Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Czechia, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom and Uruguay. A further 11 States have signed the Protocol but have yet to ratify it, namely, the Bahamas, Côte d'Ivoire, Greece, Indonesia, Kenya, Malta, Namibia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

20. On 6 March 2017, the Secretary-General circulated a note encouraging all those members of the Authority that have not yet done so to become parties to the Protocol at their earliest convenience.

## **VII. Administrative matters**

### **A. Secretariat**

21. The secretariat is one of the principal organs of the Authority. In accordance with article 166 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General and such staff as the Authority may require. The staff of the secretariat shall consist of such qualified scientific and technical and other personnel as may be required to fulfil the administrative functions of the Authority.

22. Upon assuming office, the Secretary-General announced certain changes to the organizational structure of the secretariat. Those included the establishment of a senior management group and a new contract management unit. Detailed information regarding the restructuring of the secretariat is reported to the Assembly in document [ISBA/23/A/4](#). Some of the concerns regarding the resources, structure and coordination of the secretariat are also reflected in the final report on the review conducted pursuant to article 154 of the Convention (see [ISBA/23/A/3](#)).

23. The number of established posts in the secretariat is 40 (22 Professional, 2 National and 16 General Service). During the reporting period, three staff members retired and seven vacant positions were filled.

### **B. Participation in the common system of the United Nations**

24. The Authority applies to its staff the common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service of the United Nations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. Under the terms of the relationship agreement

concluded with the United Nations in 1997 which entered into force on 26 November 1997, following its approval by the Assembly of the Authority (see [ISBA/3/A/3](#)) and the General Assembly of the United Nations (see resolution [52/27](#), annex), both organizations agree to apply common personnel standards, methods and arrangements. At its 139th meeting, on 27 July 2012, the Assembly of the Authority, acting upon a recommendation of the Council, decided that it would be desirable for the Authority to subscribe to the statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) with effect from January 2013 (see [ISBA/18/A/7](#)). The secretariat was represented at the eighty-fourth session of ICSC, held at United Nations Headquarters in March 2017. The agenda included resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-first session relating to the work of ICSC, the conditions of service applicable to all categories of staff, the review of pensionable remuneration, the review of the hardship classification methodology and post adjustment issues.

25. The secretariat is an active participant in the work of the United Nations operations management team comprising all United Nations agencies present in Kingston.<sup>1</sup> The initiative is designed to enable participating agencies to achieve cost savings and streamline their operations in key areas such as human resources, communications and information technology, finance, procurement, travel and common premises. The team's strategies during the reporting period did not include new cost-saving targets but instead focused mostly on the development of monitoring tools to ensure that current benefits achieved with regard to courier services and stationery were maintained. Work is in progress with regard to the development of a long-term travel agreement, a consultant database, the encouragement of "green initiatives" and the improvement of common services such as telecommunications and meeting facilities.

### **C. Comprehensive review of the compensation package of the common system**

26. In 2013, ICSC undertook a comprehensive review of the common system compensation package in order to ensure that the pay and benefits provided to staff continued to be fit for purpose. In 2015, having considered the report of ICSC for 2015 ([A/70/30](#)), the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the majority of the proposals and decided that they should be implemented for the United Nations Secretariat and for common system organizations, as appropriate, in phases from 2016 to 2018 (see resolution [70/244](#)).

27. In accordance with article 11 of the relationship agreement between the Authority and the United Nations, and with the assistance of an expert from ICSC, the secretariat conducted its own review in January 2017 and has begun to implement the necessary changes to the compensation package for staff in the Professional and higher categories. The details of the changes to benefits and entitlements are elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General to the Finance Committee ([ISBA/23/FC/2](#)). Necessary amendments to the Staff Regulations will be considered by the Council and the Assembly during the twenty-third session.

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<sup>1</sup> The participating agencies, in addition to the Authority, are the United Nations Population Fund, the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

## **D. Cost-saving measures**

28. The secretariat continued its efforts to find cost savings in its regular budget, including through the outsourcing of local transportation during meetings, which will reduce the overtime expenditure of the staff of the Security and Transport Unit. The secretariat has also updated its administrative instruction on official travel in line with that of the United Nations. Efforts are also being made to reduce conference servicing costs by introducing efficiency measures and reducing the number of New York-based conference servicing staff.

## **VIII. Financial matters**

### **A. Budget**

29. At its twenty-second session, the Assembly adopted an administrative budget for the financial period 2017-2018 in the amount of \$17,130,700 (see [ISBA/22/A/13](#)).

### **B. Status of contributions**

30. In accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, the administrative expenses of the Authority shall be met by assessed contributions of its members until the Authority has sufficient funds from other sources to meet those expenses. The scale of assessments shall be based on the scale used for the regular budget of the United Nations, adjusted for differences in membership. As at 31 May 2017, 52 per cent of the value of contributions to the 2017 budget due from member States and the European Union had been received, while 26 per cent of the membership of the Authority had fully paid their 2017 assessed contribution amounts.

31. Contributions outstanding from member States for prior periods (1998-2016) amounted to \$561,807 as at 31 May 2017. Notices are sent on a regular basis to member States, reminding them of the arrears. In accordance with article 184 of the Convention and rule 80 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, a member of the Authority which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contribution shall have no vote if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of financial contribution due from it for the preceding two years. As at 31 May 2017, the following 48 members of the Authority had been in arrears for two years or more: Angola, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, the Comoros, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Liberia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, the Niger, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

32. As at 31 May 2017, the balance of the working capital fund stood at \$581,983 against an approved level of \$660,000.



### **C. Voluntary Trust Fund**

33. The Voluntary Trust Fund for the participation of members of the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission from developing countries was established in 2002. Provisional terms and conditions for the use of the Fund were adopted by the Assembly in 2003 and amended in 2004 (see [ISBA/9/A/5-ISBA/9/C/5](#), para. 6 and annex, and [ISBA/9/A/9](#), para. 14). The Fund is made up of voluntary contributions from members of the Authority and others. Total contributions to the Fund over its lifetime amount to \$654,584. The most recent contribution was made by China in May 2017, in the amount of \$20,000. The balance of the Voluntary Trust Fund as at 31 May 2017 stood at the amount of \$92,893.

34. In 2016, the Finance Committee requested the Secretary-General to provide it with a report and an analysis on the use of the Voluntary Trust Fund, noting that the terms and conditions had not been reviewed since 2004. Such a report has been prepared and will be considered by the Committee during the twenty-third session.

### **D. Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area**

35. The Assembly established the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area in 2006 (see [ISBA/12/A/11](#)). Detailed rules and procedures for the administration and utilization of the Fund were adopted in 2007 (see [ISBA/13/A/6](#), annex). The Fund aims to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole, in particular by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programmes, including through training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes. The Fund is administered by the secretariat. Members of the Authority, other States, relevant international organizations, academic, scientific and technical institutions, philanthropic organizations and private persons may make contributions to the Fund.

36. As at 31 May 2017, the capital of the Fund stood at \$3,473,315. As at the same date, a total amount of \$528,053 had been disbursed from the interest accrued on the capital in the form of awards for projects. The most recent, and sole, contribution to the Fund during 2016 was made by Mexico in December 2016 in the amount of \$7,500. Over the past three years total contributions to the Fund amounted to \$66,227, whereas total expenditure over the same period was \$117,380. A further problem for the Fund is that the average interest rate earned from investing the capital of the Fund in the first four months of 2017 was 0.4 per cent, with an average rate of 1.5 per cent over the period 2006-2017. In 2016, the Finance Committee requested the Secretary-General to make arrangements to reinvest the Fund to produce a higher rate of return; that request should be fulfilled by June 2017.

## **IX. Satya N. Nandan Library**

37. The Satya N. Nandan Library, named after the first Secretary-General of the Authority, is the main information resource for the secretariat, member States, permanent missions and other researchers seeking specialist information on the law of the sea, ocean affairs, deep seabed mining and seabed resources. Its principal objective is to service the reference and research needs of its clientele and to provide essential support for the work of the secretariat. The Authority is committed

to developing the specialized research capability of the existing collection through an acquisitions programme aimed at responding to the changes in the delivery and formats of information and knowledge, and building on and strengthening the Library's comprehensive collection. The Library is also increasing access to e-resources.

38. During the reporting period, generous donations were received from organizations and individuals. Noteworthy among the donors were the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea; the United Nations Environment Programme; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO; the World Bank; the Interoceanmetal Joint Organization; the State Oceanic Administration of China; the Tokyo Institute of Technology; the Center for Oceans Law and Policy, University of Virginia; the Law of the Sea Institute, University of California, Berkeley; the German Advisory Council on Global Change; the United States Institute of Peace; the International Council of Environmental Law; the Planning Institute of Jamaica; and the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology of Jamaica. Individual donations were received from Kaiser Gonçalves de Souza, on behalf of the African Minerals Development Centre; Kim Woong-Seo, on behalf of the Korean Society of Oceanography; Claudia Rezende of the Companhia de Pesquisa de Recursos Minerais (CPRM), Brazil; Aline Jaeckel, Macquarie Law School, Australia; and Rahul Sharma, National Institute of Oceanography, India.

39. The Library facilities available to visitors, including delegates, consist of a reading room with access to the collection for reference purposes, and computer terminals for email and Internet usage. Services provided include information, reference and research support, as well as the distribution of the official documents and publications of the Authority. The Library is an active member of the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers and the Library and Information Association of Jamaica. In 2015, the Library formed a partnership with the library of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to join the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium. The Consortium is a system-wide libraries initiative, used through the United Nations system libraries, which generates considerable savings for participating agencies by bringing down the cost of information through a collective purchasing arrangement and shared services to online repositories.

40. Since 2015, the Library has invested in a development and modernization programme, with the aim of strengthening service provision and infrastructure and expanding access to and encouraging the use of the unique content of the collection. In early 2017, new lounge area furniture was acquired. Progress has also been made in the implementation of a new library management system, and a software vendor was selected following a formal tender process. The new library management system, the EOS.Web digital cloud system, a SirsiDynix product, will provide the opportunity to search and explore library materials using an online public access catalogue, bringing together print and digital publications, articles, web resources, and select databases, both subscription-based and free, in order to position the Library as a high-quality research centre. It is anticipated that the library management system will be fully implemented during 2017, following software deployment and training.

41. The Library receives numerous requests for research assistance, many of which reflect the increasing interest in the work of the Authority. Research interest is focused on the activities of the Authority and its role, functions and future

challenges, as well as on the subject areas covered by the Convention. In addition, there is widespread interest in information on the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area and on fellowship and training opportunities available through the Fund. Research assistance was provided to the Commonwealth secretariat; South Asian University, New Delhi; the Marine Biology Research Group, Ghent University; the University of California, Santa Barbara; the Ministry of Earth Sciences, National Institute of Oceanography, India; the Associated Press; Sealight Pictures, Australia; the University of São Paulo, Brazil; the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law, University of New South Wales; China People's Daily; the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association; the Faculty of Law and the Department of Language, Linguists and Philosophy, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica; the Norman Manley Law School, Jamaica; the Caribbean Maritime Institute; and government bodies of Jamaica, including the Attorney General's Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Mines and Geology Division of the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology, the National Environment and Planning Agency, the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the Jamaica Information Service. Requests were also received from individual researchers, academic and research institutions, embassies and permanent missions based in Jamaica and around the world.

## **X. Communications and information technology services, website and public information and outreach**

42. The Communications and Information Technology Service with the Office for Administrative Services supports the work of the secretariat by administering the network infrastructure and services and providing technical support and training to staff members. Major projects developed during the reporting period include the implementation of the Data Management Strategy, the electronic library management system and financial accounting packages for the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

43. In January 2017, an external audit was conducted to review the overall network architecture and to assess its robustness and adaptability in meeting current and emerging demands. The audit was also an opportunity to evaluate the current governance, security and oversight of the Service, as well as its operational structure. Based on the recommendations of the audit report, a technical implementation plan has been developed and the Secretary-General has taken measures to establish an advisory committee for the Service, as well as to promulgate an acceptable-use policy for the secretariat.

44. The Authority maintains a strong online presence through its website, its mobile application and through social media. The website ([www.isa.org.jm](http://www.isa.org.jm)) provides access to all digital publications and official documents of the Authority's annual meetings and the meetings of its subsidiary organs as well as all workshops and seminars organized by the Authority. The Authority's website is also regularly updated with relevant information received from member States and contractors, including in relation to the enactment of deep-sea mining national legislation and contractor training programmes. The mobile application (ISBAHQ), which is a condensed version of the website of the Authority, has been created to provide quickly accessed and up-to-date information on the Authority's structure and organs, the most recent publications available and the latest news and information, including with regard to capacity-building opportunities. In an effort to generate greater awareness of its work, the Authority also maintains a regular presence through social media, mainly through its Facebook page and Twitter (@ISBAHQ) handle.

45. The Authority has also taken steps to engage a wide range of stakeholders through consultations and surveys, and continues to interact frequently with its States parties and relevant stakeholders by providing a regular flow of information on its activities. Key communication methods used by the Authority have been quarterly e-newsletters, press releases, social media, brochures, flyers advertising contractor training programmes, fact sheets, briefing papers and technical studies that provide summaries of legal and scientific workshops and seminars, hosted by the Authority, or jointly coordinated with other legal and scientific institutions.

46. In June 2017, the secretariat convened an open forum at the University of the West Indies in Kingston in an effort to explain its work to the wider community in Jamaica. The forum, which was open to the public, was attended by government officials, academia, students, members of permanent missions and other members of civil society.

47. The secretariat also convened side events at a number of international conferences and meetings, including a side event on the actions taken to provide capacity-building and training opportunities to developing countries, which was held at the third session of the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution [69/292](#) on the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. During the capacity-building side event, the secretariat gave a presentation followed by a discussion session on the history, achievements and future of the Authority's contractor training programme and Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research programme. The secretariat took note of the comments and suggestions to improve and sustain the programmes that were put forward by the audience during discussion. The secretariat was also invited to participate in and contribute to the side event organized by Yokohama City University, the International Organization for Standardization and the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology on the standardization of tools and monitoring for marine environmental impact assessments in the Area from the technical and legal perspectives.

## **XI. Visits to the headquarters of the Authority and other activities**

48. On 25 November 2016, Naval officers from the Brazilian naval training ship *Brasil*, led by Captain José Luiz Ferreira Canela, and the Colombian navy vessel *Gloria*, led by Captain Juan Jimenez, visited the secretariat. On 15 March 2017, a delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile visited the secretariat. During those visits, the delegations were briefed on the structure and work programme of the Authority.

49. The Authority participated, as one of the associate sponsors, at the forty-first annual conference of the Center of Oceans Law and Policy, entitled "The marine environment and UN Sustainable Development Goal 14", organized by the Center in cooperation with the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs of Indonesia, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 16 to 19 May 2017. The Authority acted as the moderator of panel 3 on the "Status of deep seabed minerals".

## **XII. Relationship with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations and bodies**

50. Activities undertaken in the ocean are closely intertwined, making cooperation and coordination essential among intergovernmental organizations with mandates over activities in the ocean. That fact is emphasized in articles 138 and 169 of the Convention itself, and is a critical element to ensuring a consistent approach to the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the sustainable development of ocean activities. To that end, the secretariat has participated in a number of initiatives with other relevant organizations aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and dialogue among users of the Area.

### **A. United Nations**

51. The Authority has a close and productive working relationship with the United Nations, in particular with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs at the United Nations. The Authority provided information on its activities to the twenty-seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention in June 2017. The Authority also contributed information towards the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/257](#) on oceans and the law of the sea. It also participated in the first three sessions of the Preparatory Committee. At the third session of the Preparatory Committee, held from 27 March to 7 April 2017, the Authority made statements in connection with its mandate at the meetings of the informal working group on environmental impact assessments and at the informal working group on capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

52. The Authority also actively contributed to the work and discussions of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, held in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017. At that occasion, the Authority provided inputs to several Partnership Dialogues, notably Partnership Dialogues 5 (“Increasing economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets”), 6 (“Increasing scientific knowledge, and developing research capacity and transfer of marine technology”) and 7 (“Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea”).

53. The Authority also registered a series of voluntary commitments with a view to (a) “Enhancing the role of women in marine scientific research through capacity-building”; (b) “Encouraging dissemination of research results through the ISA Secretary-General Award for Deep-Sea Research Excellence”; (c) “Improving the assessment of essential ecological functions of the deep sea oceans through long-term underwater oceanographic observatories in the Area”; and (d) “Enhancing deep sea marine biodiversity assessment through the creation of online taxonomic atlases linked to deep mining activities in the Area”. Additional voluntary commitments were registered in partnership with other agencies, notably with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (“Abyssal initiative for Blue Growth: advancing SDG 14 and the quest for a Blue Economy through the promotion of socioeconomic benefits for developing countries, including SIDS, and increasing scientific knowledge and research capacity”) and with the African Minerals Development Centre and GRID-Arendal (“Fostering cooperation to promote the sustainable development of Africa’s deep seabed resources in support to Africa’s Blue Economy” and “Mapping the Blue Economy of Africa to support

decision-making, investment and governance of activities undertaken on the extended continental shelf and in adjacent international seabed areas”).

54. The Authority participated in four side events during the Conference. One was organized with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, Mexico and Tonga, with the support of Tonga Offshore Mining Limited, entitled “Abyssal initiative for Blue Growth: advancing SDG 14 and the quest for a Blue Economy through the promotion of socioeconomic benefits for developing countries, including SIDS, and increasing scientific knowledge and research capacity: perspectives on deep sea mining”. Another was organized by UN-Oceans (“Supporting the implementation of the ocean-related targets in the 2030 Agenda”). Last but not least, the Authority participated in a side event organized by the governments of Switzerland and Zambia and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (“Enhancing the participation of the landlocked States in the implementation of sustainable development goal (SDG) 14”). In addition, the Authority hosted an exhibition to raise awareness on its work which was very well received (“Contributing to the sustainable development of deep sea mineral resources the Area for the benefit of mankind: the role of the International Seabed Authority”).

## **B. UN-Oceans**

55. UN-Oceans is a United Nations inter-agency mechanism mandated to strengthen and promote the coordination and coherence of United Nations systems and activities related to ocean and coastal areas; regularly share information about the ongoing and planned activities of participating organizations within the framework of relevant United Nations and other mandates, with a view to identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy; facilitate, as appropriate, inputs by its participating organizations to the annual reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on oceans and the law of the sea; and facilitate inter-agency information exchange, including the sharing of experiences, best practices, tools and methodologies and lessons learned in ocean-related matters.

56. The secretariat of the Authority is a member of UN-Oceans and participates in its meetings, as appropriate, and in accordance with its mandate. During the reporting period, the secretariat participated in a number of teleconferences and contributed to discussions on the indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (c) on enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as recalled in paragraph 158 of General Assembly resolution [66/288](#), entitled “The future we want”.

57. In April 2017, the Secretary-General was pleased to host the sixteenth face-to-face meeting of UN-Oceans at the Authority’s headquarters in Kingston.

## **C. International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf**

58. As one of the three institutions established under the Convention, the Authority maintains a good working relationship and cooperates with the other two bodies: the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

59. As a follow-up to the twentieth anniversary symposium held in October 2016, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea convened a symposium in Hamburg, Germany, on 18 March 2017 entitled “ITLOS at 20: Looking into the future”. The Secretary-General was invited to make a presentation on the advisory role and contentious jurisdiction of the Seabed Disputes Chamber of the Tribunal.

60. The Secretary-General was also invited to speak at the open meeting of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, held on 10 March 2017, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of its establishment. In his statement, the Secretary-General underlined the specific and narrowly defined mandates and responsibilities of both the Commission and the Authority, as well as the importance of the establishment of national maritime boundaries, including the outer limits of the continental shelf, in order for the Authority to be able to effectively fulfil its responsibilities under the Convention. It was further emphasized that only seven States parties have fulfilled their obligation under paragraph 2, article 84, to deposit charts or lists of geographical coordinates showing the outer limit lines of the continental shelf with the Secretary-General of the Authority.

#### **D. Relationship with other organizations**

61. During the reporting period, the Authority was represented at the 2017 International Cable Protection Committee plenary meeting, held in Montevideo from 25 to 27 April 2017. Discussions have been initiated to enhance cooperation between the Authority and the Committee in the use of Science Monitoring and Reliable Telecommunications (SMART) technology.

62. In April 2017, the OSPAR Commission and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission invited the Authority to participate in the third meeting under the collective arrangement, held in London. Although the secretariat of the Authority was not able to be represented at that meeting, it submitted a written statement describing the current work of the Authority.

63. Pursuant to the agreement of cooperation between the Authority and the International Hydrographic Organization, signed during the twenty-second session of the Authority, the Secretary-General attended the first session of the Assembly of the International Hydrographic Organization, held in Monaco from 24 to 28 April 2017.

### **XIII. Relations with the host country**

64. The secretariat enjoys an excellent working relationship with the host country. On 7 March 2017, a meeting was organized between the Secretary-General and Sheila Sealy Monteith, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, during which it was agreed to improve cooperation by holding regular quarterly meetings to discuss matters of common interest. The meeting was also the occasion to discuss the implications for the Authority of the proposed relocation of the United Nations agencies present in Jamaica to the building presently occupied by the Authority.

65. The Secretary-General is strongly in favour of and welcomes the initiative of the Government of Jamaica to relocate the other United Nations agencies, and the secretariat has participated in the various working groups and committees established to work out the practical issues and modalities associated with the move. One of the key benefits to the Authority of the move is the possibility of sharing

certain essential services with other United Nations agencies, including security and safety services.

66. One of the most pressing needs for the secretariat is a multifunctional conference room, equipped with modern audiovisual equipment and suitable for workshops and seminars. Such a room would enable the secretariat to hold more of its technical meetings, seminars and workshops in Jamaica. It is hoped that provision for such a conference room can be incorporated into the future planning for Block 11.

#### **XIV. Previous session of the Authority**

67. The twenty-second session of the Council of the Authority was held in Kingston from 11 to 22 July 2016, and comprised its 213th to 223rd meetings. The Council elected Mariusz Orion Jędrysek (Poland) as its President. During the session, the Council took note of the reports on the status of contracts for exploration in the Area (see [ISBA/22/C/5](#)), the periodic review of the implementation of the plans of work for exploration in the Area (see [ISBA/22/C/7](#)) and the status of national legislation relating to deep seabed mining (see [ISBA/22/C/8](#)). The Council considered the summary report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission on the work of the Commission during the twenty-second session (see [ISBA/22/C/17](#)) and adopted a decision relating to that report (see [ISBA/22/C/28](#)). Acting on the recommendation of the Commission, the Council approved an application for the approval of a plan of work for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts submitted by the Government of the Republic of Korea and requested the Secretary-General to issue the plan of work in the form of a contract between the Authority and the Government of the Republic of Korea (see [ISBA/22/C/20](#)). Also acting on the recommendation of the Commission, the Council approved six applications for extension of contracts for exploration, submitted respectively by the Interoceanmetal Joint Organization, Yuzhmorgeologiya, the Government of the Republic of Korea, the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association, Deep Ocean Resources Development Co., Ltd. and the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer. The decisions of the Council with respect to each application are contained in documents [ISBA/22/C/21](#) to [ISBA/22/C/26](#). The Council welcomed the Commission's work on the framework for the exploitation regulations, in particular the provision of the first working draft of the exploitation regulations, endorsed the Commission's list of priority deliverables for the development of the exploitation regulations over the next 12 to 18 months (see [ISBA/22/C/17](#), annex II) and requested the Commission to continue its work on exploitation regulations as a matter of priority (see [ISBA/22/C/30](#)). On the basis of the recommendations of the Finance Committee, the Council adopted a decision relating to the budget of the Authority for the financial period 2017-2018 (see [ISBA/22/C/18](#)). The Council proposed two candidates to the Assembly for election as Secretary-General (see [ISBA/22/C/27](#)), and adopted a decision relating to the election of members of the Commission (see [ISBA/22/C/29](#)), in which the Council, among others, elected 30 members of the Commission for the period 2017-2021, and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Commission, to provide a report regarding procedures for election of the members of the Commission, by 31 December 2016, for consideration by the Council at the twenty-third session.

68. The twenty-second session of the Assembly of the Authority was held in Kingston from 11 to 22 July 2016, and comprised its 155th to 161st meetings. The Assembly elected Mohammad Khurshed Alam (Bangladesh) as its President. During the session, the Assembly considered and debated the annual report of the Secretary-



General of the Authority, submitted in compliance with article 166, paragraph 4, of the Convention (a summary of the debate is contained in [ISBA/22/A/15](#)). The Assembly also considered the interim report of the Review Committee established to oversee the implementation of the Convention under article 154 (the decision of the Assembly in that respect is contained in [ISBA/22/A/11](#)). The Assembly elected Michael W. Lodge (United Kingdom) as Secretary-General for a four-year term of office commencing on 1 January 2017 (see [ISBA/22/A/10](#)). The Assembly elected 15 nominees as members of the Finance Committee to serve for the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021 (see [ISBA/22/A/14](#)). The Assembly also elected 18 States to fill vacancies on the Council (see [ISBA/22/A/12/Rev.1](#)). On the recommendation of the Council, the Assembly adopted the budget and scale of assessment for the financial period 2017-2018 (see [ISBA/22/A/13](#)).

## **XV. Ongoing supervision of contracts for exploration and award of new contracts as necessary**

69. At the core of the Authority's functions, as the organization through which States parties to the Convention administer the resources of the Area, is the responsibility to approve and issue contracts to qualified entities wishing to explore for or exploit deep-sea mineral resources. The contractual nature of the relationship between the Authority and those wishing to conduct activities in the Area is fundamental to the legal regime established by Part XI of the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. Annex III to the Convention, which sets out the "Basic conditions of prospecting, exploration and exploitation", also forms an integral part of that legal regime, which is further elaborated in the rules, regulations and procedures adopted by the Authority.

### **A. Status of contracts for exploration**

70. As at 31 May 2017, 27 contracts for exploration had entered into force (17 for polymetallic nodules, 6 for polymetallic sulphides and 4 for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts). During the reporting period, three new contracts were signed. A contract for exploration for polymetallic nodules was signed with the Cook Islands Investment Corporation on 15 July 2016, a contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides was signed with the Government of India on 26 September 2016 and a contract for exploration for polymetallic nodules was signed with the China MinMetals Corporation on 12 May 2017. An exploration contract for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts with the Government of the Republic of Korea, approved by the Council in 2016, is expected to be signed in the course of 2017.

71. Following the decision of the Council to approve five-year extensions of the contracts of exploration with the Interoceanmetal Joint Organization, Yuzhmoregeologiya, the Government of the Republic of Korea, the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association, Deep Ocean Resources Development Co., Ltd. and the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer, extension agreements with the Interoceanmetal Joint Organization, the Government of the Republic of Korea, the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association and Deep Ocean Resources Development Co., Ltd. have been signed. The remaining extension agreements will be signed before the end of the twenty-third session of the Authority.

## **B. Pending application for contracts for exploration**

72. On 25 January 2017, an application for exploration for polymetallic sulphides was received by the Secretary-General from the Government of Poland. The application area is in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, located between the Hayes, Atlantis and Kane transform fault zones. The application is to be considered by the Commission during its meetings in July and August 2017.

## **C. Status of annual reports submitted by the contractors**

73. Each contractor is obligated to submit an annual report to the Secretary-General of the Authority within 90 days of the end of each calendar year, covering its programme of activities in the exploration area. As at 31 March 2017, a total of 26 annual reports were received. Those annual reports are to be considered by the Commission during its session in July 2017.

## **D. Informal meeting of the contractors**

74. On 21 and 22 June 2017, the Secretary-General convened an informal meeting of contractors in Kingston. The purpose of the meeting was, inter alia, to introduce the contractors to the new database of the Authority, currently under development, and to hold informal exchanges on other matters of concern, including the status of the development of the mineral exploitation code.

# **XVI. Progressive development of the regulatory regime for activities in the Area**

75. The Authority has a fundamental role to play in ensuring that an appropriate regulatory regime is established, in accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, which provides adequate security of tenure for future exploration for, and exploitation of, the mineral resources of the Area, while ensuring effective protection for the marine environment. The regulatory regime would ultimately be encapsulated in a mining code, which would comprise the whole of the comprehensive set of rules, regulations and procedures issued by the Authority to regulate prospecting, exploration and exploitation of marine minerals in the Area.

## **A. Prospecting and exploration**

76. The mining code currently consists of three sets of regulations covering prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules ([ISBA/19/C/17](#), annex), polymetallic sulphides ([ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1](#), annex) and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts ([ISBA/18/A/11](#), annex). In addition to specifying the process through which contracts may be applied for and granted, the regulations set out the standard terms and conditions, applicable to all entities, of contracts with the Authority.

77. The regulations are supplemented by recommendations for the guidance of contractors issued by the Legal and Technical Commission. At present, recommendations that have been issued by the Commission include:

- (a) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors and sponsoring States relating to training programmes under plans of work for exploration ([ISBA/19/LTC/14](#));

(b) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors for the assessment of the possible environmental impacts arising from exploration for marine minerals in the Area ([ISBA/19/LTC/8](#));

(c) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors for the reporting of actual and direct exploration expenditure ([ISBA/21/LTC/11](#));

(d) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors on the content, format and structure of annual reports ([ISBA/21/LTC/15](#)).

78. In addition, during its twenty-first session, the Council adopted the procedures and criteria for extension of an approved plan of work for exploration (see [ISBA/21/C/19](#)). During its eighteenth session, the Council approved the environmental management plan for the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone as recommended by the Commission, which includes the designation, on a provisional basis, of a network of areas of particular environmental interest and gives effect to the precautionary approach as called for by the Regulations (see [ISBA/18/C/22](#)).

## **B. Exploitation**

79. It is recalled that the Council, at its seventeenth session in 2011, requested the secretariat to prepare a strategic workplan for the formulation of the regulations for mining of deep-sea minerals in the Area (see [ISBA/17/C/21](#)). During its nineteenth session in 2013, the Commission began consideration of the issues relating to proposed regulations for exploitation of polymetallic nodules in the Area (see [ISBA/19/C/14](#)). At its twentieth session in 2014, the Council requested the Commission to continue its work on the regulations governing exploitation as a matter of priority and to make available to all members of the Authority and all stakeholders a draft framework for the regulation of exploitation in the Area (see [ISBA/20/C/31](#)). Accordingly, in July 2015, the Commission issued a revised draft framework and action plan and identified seven priority deliverables for the next 12 to 18 months (see [ISBA/21/C/16](#)). The Council endorsed the Commission's list of priority deliverables and requested the Commission to continue its work on exploitation regulations as a matter of priority (see [ISBA/21/C/20](#)). In July 2016, the Commission considered a revised working draft of the exploitation regulations and provided a second phase of priority deliverables for the development of the exploitation regulations over the next 12 to 18 months (see [ISBA/22/C/17](#)), which was endorsed by the Council. The Council further requested the Commission to continue its work on exploitation regulations as a matter of priority (see [ISBA/22/C/28](#)). Subsequent to that meeting in July 2016, the Commission issued a revised working draft to the members of the Authority and all stakeholders for comments. During its 2017 spring session, the Commission considered the stakeholders' comments on the working draft exploitation regulations (including the standard clauses of the exploitation contract) as well as a discussion paper on the development and drafting of regulations on exploitation for mineral resources in the area (environmental matters).

80. From 20 to 24 March 2017, in Berlin, the secretariat of the Authority organized an international workshop entitled "Towards an ISA Environmental Management Strategy for the Area" together with the German Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany. The objective of the workshop was to assist the Authority in designing a strategy for environmental management of deep seabed mining. More specifically, the workshop provided a multi-stakeholder forum in which experts in science, law and environmental management, among others, exchanged views and provided feedback from a multidisciplinary perspective on

various issues in connection with the design and development of the environmental provisions of the mining code, based on the discussion paper on environmental matters issued by the secretariat in January 2017. Among the items discussed were environmental standards, environmental impact assessment procedures and criteria, adaptive management, regional environmental management and elements of a long-term environmental strategy for the Authority. The report of the workshop, identifying points for further consideration, will be published as a technical study of the Authority.

81. The secretariat and some members of the Legal and Technical Commission also participated in an external workshop connected with the development of a payment mechanism, which was held in Singapore in April 2017. The key focus of the workshop was the introduction to participating stakeholders of a working financial model and a subsequent discussion of the components of the model and its underlying assumptions. A financial model is an important deliverable because it will allow the Commission to explore royalty-rate scenarios and payment mechanism options for the various phases of exploitation, and to discuss those scenarios with contractors and other stakeholders. To further develop the workshop product into a viable working model and to incorporate suggested options, the Secretary-General intends to request contractors to provide their forecasted financial data to the secretariat to allow a range of such data to be modelled. The Singapore workshop also considered possible incentive mechanisms, including funds and bonds, to support the delivery of environmental objectives. Such mechanisms will require further investigation, including with regard to other market-based financial tools and a related issue of the liability regime of the Area. A summary report of the workshop is available on the Authority's website.

### **C. National laws and regulations relating to deep seabed mining**

82. At the seventeenth session of the Authority, in 2011, the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the laws, regulations and administrative measures adopted by sponsoring States and other members of the Authority with regard to activities in the Area, and invited, for that purpose, sponsoring States and other members of the Authority, as appropriate, to provide the secretariat with information on, or the texts of, relevant national laws, regulations and administrative measures (see [ISBA/17/C/20](#), para. 3). Subsequently, the secretariat established an online database of the information on, or the texts of, national laws, regulations and administrative measures that had been submitted to it and submitted an annual report on the status of such national legislation to the Council ([ISBA/18/C/8](#) and Add.1, [ISBA/20/C/12](#), [ISBA/20/C/11](#) and Corr.1 and Add.1, [ISBA/21/C/7](#) and [ISBA/22/C/8](#)).

83. On 10 March 2017, the secretariat circulated a note verbale inviting sponsoring States and other members of the Authority to submit to the secretariat texts of their relevant national laws, regulations and administrative measures or related information. In response to that note, France, Kiribati and Nauru submitted their national legislation on 21 February, 19 April and 18 May 2017 respectively. On 18 May 2017, Georgia submitted its relevant information to the secretariat.

84. As at 31 May 2017, the following States had provided information on, or the texts of, relevant national laws, regulations and administrative measures: Belgium, China, the Cook Islands, Cuba, Czechia, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, France, Georgia, Germany, Guyana, India, Japan, Kiribati, Mexico, Nauru, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Niue, Oman, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Tonga, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Zambia. A submission was also

received from the secretariat of the Pacific Community, on behalf of the Pacific Islands region.

## **XVII. Promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area**

### **A. Technical workshops**

85. Since 1998, the Authority has convened a number of international workshops on scientific and technical matters in order to provide it with the best available scientific advice for the formulation of rules, regulations and procedures for managing activities in the Area. The workshops are an important mechanism for the promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area and a platform for collaboration with contractors and the international scientific community.

86. Workshops are important for the standardization of the data and information required for the assessment of the environmental impact of activities in the Area and the environmental management of the large provinces of mineral wealth in the Area. Workshops are also an important mechanism for the promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area, for providing an opportunity for contractors and applied scientists to exchange ideas and for serving as a platform for the identification of gaps in the knowledge base required to sustainably undertake exploitation in the Area, which could be better addressed through collaboration among contractors and with the international scientific community.

87. Given the limited funding available, it is expected that most workshops convened by the Authority would be focused on issues associated with the priority deliverables identified in connection with the development of the exploitation regulations. In that regard, the joint workshop on environmental matters, held in Berlin from 20 to 24 March 2017, has already been mentioned.

88. During the second half of 2017, the secretariat intends to convene a technical workshop to establish design criteria for “impact reference zones” and “preservation reference zones”. Terms of reference for such a workshop were adopted by the Legal and Technical Commission at its meeting in February 2017.

### **B. Sensitization seminars**

89. As a capacity-building and outreach initiative, the Authority has also, over the years, organized sensitization seminars aimed at bringing together experts from the international legal and scientific community with national and regional government officials, scientists, researchers and academics to discuss scientific research on marine minerals and propose mechanisms for improving regional cooperation in scientific research and marine mineral development. Topics covered at the seminars include the status of the legal regime established for the recovery of minerals, the types of minerals found in the Area, resource evaluation, protection and preservation of the marine environment from prospecting, exploration and mining, and capacity-building. Previous sensitization seminars have been held in Manado, Indonesia (2007), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2008), Abuja (2009), Madrid (2010), Kingston (2011), Mexico City (2013), United Nations Headquarters in New York (2010, 2012, 2014), Pretoria (2015) and Santiago (2015).

90. A sensitization seminar was held in Kampala from 2 to 4 May 2017 on the marine mineral resources of Africa’s continental shelf and adjacent international

seabed area and the prospects for the sustainable development of Africa's maritime domain, in support of Africa's blue economy. That seminar was the first to be held in a landlocked African country and was held in partnership with the African Minerals Development Centre, the Pew Environment Group and GRID-Arendal. The seminar was intended to motivate African States to build relevant technical capacity in relation to activities in the deep seabed, increase their participation in decisions that relate to the Area and take part in the activities in the Area; define and enable sustainable activities on Africa's continental shelf; and contribute to the sustainable development of Africa's blue economy. The seminar discussed issues associated with the work of the Authority on marine mineral resources development and the protection and preservation of the marine environment from activities in the Area, and discussed and proposed mechanisms for improving regional cooperation and the participation of African countries, in particular the landlocked countries, in the deep seabed regime. One of the key outcomes of the seminar was a voluntary commitment to the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 by the Authority, the African Minerals Development Centre and GRID-Arendal to work together to develop a programme on fostering cooperation to promote the sustainable development of Africa's deep seabed resources in support of Africa's blue economy.

91. Many requests are received for sensitization seminars and it is clear that there is a high demand for such initiatives among members of the Authority. It is also apparent that there is a general lack of awareness and lack of coordination on issues associated with the implementation of the Convention generally. It must be emphasized, however, that the Authority has no dedicated budget for the purpose of holding sensitization seminars. While the costs of hosting such seminars are usually met by the host country, funds are needed to support the attendance of members of the secretariat and external experts and, where possible, the participation of representatives from other countries in the region. Without dedicated funding for that purpose, it is only possible to support such seminars through the limited cost savings that can be realized in other budgets and programmes, combined with support from external donors and other organizations. In that regard, the Secretary-General wishes to express his utmost appreciation to the African Minerals Development Centre, GRID-Arendal, the Pew Environment Group and the Government of Uganda for their financial and in-kind support that made the seminar in Kampala possible. In-kind support was also gratefully received from the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton, United Kingdom, G-TEC Sea Mineral Resources NV, UK Seabed Resources, Ltd. and the Government of the Netherlands. The Secretary-General welcomes and encourages similar cooperation from other member States and interested organizations.

## **XVIII. Strengthening and coordination of international cooperation in marine scientific research**

92. The secretariat has been working in close cooperation with the Global Ocean Observing System, an international programme executed by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, for the launching of a deep ocean observatory strategy. In line with that, the secretariat is currently in the process of exploring the possibility of strengthening its cooperation with relevant international organizations, such as the International Cable Protection Committee, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as with other stakeholders such as the University of Hawaii at Manoa, in the implementation of SMART methodology for telemetric

real-time monitoring of the deep sea subject to natural and anthropogenic activities in the Area.

93. The secretariat is also working towards the standardization of marine bathymetric information collected in the Area in cooperation with relevant international organizations, including the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the International Hydrographic Organization. It is anticipated that such collaboration will provide invaluable information for the recently launched General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans programme to map the ocean floor by 2030, “GEBCO 2030”.

94. In 2017, the secretariat entered into an informal cooperation with ATLAS, a transatlantic assessment and deep-water ecosystem-based spatial management plan for Europe. ATLAS is a four-year European Union Horizon 2020 project, coordinated by the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in partnership with Canada and the United States, which aims to gather diverse new information on sensitive Atlantic ecosystems (including vulnerable marine ecosystems and ecologically or biologically sensitive areas) to produce a step change in our understanding of their connectivity, functioning and responses to future changes in human use and ocean climate. The secretariat is currently assessing the platforms and formats of information generated by ATLAS with the database management plan that it is implementing.

95. As a product of its efforts to promote the standardization of environmental data and information collected by the contractors, the Authority is developing a series of online atlases to serve as taxonomic visual aids for contractors and other stakeholders. The first atlas, for megafauna in the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (<http://ccfzatlas.com>) is online, and two new atlases for macrofauna and meiofauna in the same region will be online in the second or third quarter of 2018 (providing that the supporting images are provided by contractors). The secretariat is also preparing further atlases for species associated with polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Area, which will be implemented by the end of 2018. The atlases are not intended to replace standard taxonomic tools (taxonomic keys), but rather to provide a complementary working tool to refine in an effective manner the identification of species linked to the mineral resources and their habitats. The information will also provide a window for the whole world to the marine biodiversity found in the Area.

96. In addition, the Authority is also progressing in the uses of new molecular technologies to monitor marine biodiversity in the deep sea using next generation sequencing of environmental DNA in collaboration with the Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative, the Mediterranean Science Commission, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the University of Geneva and the International Barcode of Life Project (iBOL).

## **XIX. Data Management Strategy**

97. The Legal and Technical Commission, in its report to the Council in 2015, requested the secretariat to provide a draft data management strategy and the financial implications of its implementation (see [ISBA/21/C/16](#), para. 36). In response to that request, a document was prepared by a working group of the Commission and, subsequently, with the assistance of a consulting firm, that presents a summary of the preliminary review of the current data management arrangement by the secretariat. The Commission formed the Working Group on Data Management Strategy during its February 2016 session. Based on the recommendations of the Commission, funding was approved in the budget of the

Authority for the financial period 2017-2018 to develop a new and improved database and to implement the Data Management Strategy. The budget included the approval of two new established posts within the secretariat: a Database Manager and a Geographic Information Systems Officer. Recruitment to both positions was completed in April 2017.

98. Starting in August 2016, the secretariat has begun migrating all historical data provided by contractors into a digital format (reporting templates) and into geo-referenced data (ArcGIS shapefile formats). Tabular data migrated has so far reached 1.7 million data points from areas under the approved plan of works. The process will be followed by the implementation of the Database Management Strategy plan with the assistance of an external consultant. The implementation is currently in phase 3, (information technology design and development). Periodic progress reports are delivered to the Legal and Technical Commission. The database structure and concept was also introduced to contractors at an informal meeting convened by the Secretary-General in June 2017. That meeting also provided an opportunity for technical discussions with individual contractors concerning gaps in data coverage, problems with data format and compatibility and other technical problems. It is expected that the full implementation of the Data Management Strategy will be finalized by the end of October 2018.

## **XX. Capacity-development and training**

99. There are two main ways in which the Authority seeks to carry out its responsibilities under articles 143 and 144 of the Convention to promote marine scientific research in the Area and build the capacity of developing States in deep-sea research and technology: the training programmes provided by contractors as part of the contracts for exploration in the Area, and the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area. The secretariat formalized its internship programme in 2014. In addition, since 2011, the Authority has been among the host institutions under the United Nations-Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme for Human Resources Development and Advancement of the Legal Order of the World's Oceans, administered by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

### **A. Contractor training programme**

100. Contractors with the Authority have a legal obligation to provide and fund training opportunities for trainees from developing States and the Authority. Between 2013 and 2016, a total of 45 training places were provided by nine contractors. The types of training include at-sea training, engineering training, fellowship training, master's and PhD programmes and workshop internships. Among the selected trainees, 16 were from the African group (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, the Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia), 14 were from the Asia-Pacific group (Bangladesh, the Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands and Thailand), 1 was from the Eastern European group (Georgia) and 14 were from the Latin American and Caribbean group (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica and Mexico). Fourteen of the 45 trainees were women.

101. In March 2017, Bamidele Oresajo (Nigeria) was selected for an at-sea training programme, Muhammad Y. Dosoky (Egypt) for an internship on taxonomy and Alana Jute (Trinidad and Tobago) for an internship on habitat offered by the Institut



français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer. Adelsia Coelho da Silva (Timor-Leste) was selected for the summer session of the Rhodes Academy of Oceans Law and Policy offered by G-TEC Sea Mineral Resources NV, and Ana Clara Coni e Mello (Brazil) for a G-TEC Sea Mineral Resources NV seminar on dredging technologies. In May 2017, Rashid Bazlar (Bangladesh), Mariana Benites (Brazil) and Gor Gevorgyan (Armenia) were selected for fellowship training by the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association, and Leslee Salzman (South Africa) was selected for at-sea training by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea.

102. In 2017, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation is offering five training opportunities under two separate training programmes, in accordance with its exploration contracts for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts, both covering theoretical courses and at-sea training on board research vessels. The Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany is offering four at-sea training places scheduled from 21 August to 13 October 2017, in accordance with its exploration contract for polymetallic sulphides, providing on-board and laboratory work and scientific techniques for the exploration of polymetallic sulphides by developing investigative planning skills, on-board work experience and data analysis and interpretation skills. The Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation is offering four at-sea training places scheduled for May-June 2018 for a duration of 40 days, in accordance with its exploration contract for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts, providing on-board work and investigative techniques for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts by developing investigative planning skills, on-board work experience and data analysis and interpretation skills. All such training opportunities have been advertised on the Authority's website and have been widely circulated to member States.

103. If all existing contracts and approved plans of work are implemented according to the recommendations made by the Legal and Technical Commission with respect to training programmes, in particular the recommendation that no fewer than 10 training places should be provided in each five-year period of the work programme, it could be expected that approximately 200 training places would be made available by contractors between 2017 and 2021.

## **B. Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area**

104. The Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area aims to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole, in particular by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programmes and offering them opportunities to participate in training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes. Pursuant to the agreed procedures, an advisory panel was appointed by the Secretary-General in 2014 to evaluate applications for assistance from the Fund and make recommendations to the Secretary-General (see annex).

105. The 14th meeting of the advisory panel was held on 2 March 2017. The funds available for use in 2017 are about \$24,000. The panel recommended an amount of \$10,000 to support the at-sea training (international cooperative study of seafloor sulphides on slow and ultra-slow spreading ridges) proposed by the Second Institute of Oceanography of China, an amount of \$8,000 to support the deep-sea mining seminar proposed by Shanghai Jiao Tong University and an amount of \$4,000 to the Rhodes Academy of Oceans and Law Policy for its 2017 session, in addition to a surplus from 2016 of \$3,000.

106. As at 31 May 2017, a total of 115 scientists or government officials from 45 countries have been beneficiaries of financial support from the Fund. The recipients were from Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, the Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Egypt, Fiji, Greece, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia, Namibia, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey and Viet Nam.

107. In administering the Fund, the secretariat of the Authority is required to endeavour to make arrangements with universities, scientific institutions, contractors and other entities to enable opportunities for scientists from developing countries to participate in marine scientific research activities. Such arrangements may include reducing or waiving fees for training. The secretariat has carried out a number of activities designed to draw the attention of the international donor community to the opportunities offered by the Fund and to encourage additional contributions. Those activities have included issuing press releases and promotional materials, maintaining a specially designed web page ([www.isa.org.jm/contractors/endowment-fund](http://www.isa.org.jm/contractors/endowment-fund)) and establishing a network of cooperating institutions that may be interested in offering places on courses or research opportunities. Members of the network to date include the National Oceanography Centre (United Kingdom), the National Institute of Ocean Technology (India), the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (France), the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (Germany), the National Institute of Oceanography (India), the Natural History Museum (United Kingdom), Duke University (North Carolina, United States), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico) and International Cooperation in Ridge-Crest Studies, an international, non-profit organization which promotes interdisciplinary studies of oceanic spreading centres.

108. The secretariat will continue to take steps to generate interest in the Fund on the part of potential donors and institutional partners. In that regard, it is noted that, in paragraph 68 of its resolution [71/257](#), the General Assembly expressed its appreciation to States that have made contributions to the Fund and encouraged States to make additional contributions to the Fund. It is also noted that, during its twenty-second session, in its decision relating to financial and budgetary matters ([ISBA/22/C/18](#)), the Council of the Authority strongly encouraged members of the Authority to make voluntary contributions to the Fund.

109. Notwithstanding the above calls, it is unfortunate that no contributions have been made to the Fund since 2 December 2016. The lack of support, combined with negligible investment returns, severely affects the extent to which the Fund can fulfil its mandate. The Fund is one of the principal mechanisms for enabling capacity-building in the field of marine scientific research in the deep ocean, and the Secretary-General wishes to encourage members of the Authority, other States, relevant international organizations, academic, scientific and technical institutions, philanthropic organizations, corporations and private persons to contribute to it.

### **C. Internship**

110. The purpose of the Authority's internship programme is twofold: (a) to provide a framework through which students and young government officials from diverse academic backgrounds gain exposure to the work and functions of the Authority in order to enhance their educational experience and/or gain experience in the work of the Authority; and (b) to enable the Authority to benefit from the assistance of

qualified students and young government officials specialized in various skills within the scope of activities of the Authority. The Authority accepts interns on a limited basis, depending on the specific needs of respective offices and their capacity to effectively support, accommodate and supervise the interns.

111. As at 31 May 2017, a total of 19 university graduates or governmental officials from Australia, Belgium, Chile, China, the Cook Islands, Ecuador, Fiji, France, Jamaica, Japan, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, the United Kingdom and the United States have participated in the internship programme. One major constraint in providing internships, especially to individuals from developing countries, is that the Authority has no funding to support interns, who must therefore find their own financial support for travel and subsistence. The Secretary-General would welcome any possible extrabudgetary support for an internship programme to benefit individuals from developing countries.

## Annex

### **Membership of the advisory panel for the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area, 2014-2017**

**Georgy Cherkashov** (reappointed)

Deputy Director

Institute for Geology and Mineral Resources of the Ocean, Russian Federation

**Jean-Michel Despax**

Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France to Jamaica

**Niu Qingbao**

Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Jamaica

**Ariel Fernández**

Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Argentina to Jamaica

**Kim Juniper**

Chief Scientist

Ocean Networks Canada

**Natsumi Kamiya**

Deputy Director General

Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation

**Tommo Monthe**

Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the International Seabed Authority and to the United Nations

**Gordon Paterson** (reappointed)

Research zoologist

Department of Life Sciences, Natural History Museum, London

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