

Joint letter by the President of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority for its twenty-sixth session and by the President of the Council of the International Seabed Authority for the second part of its twenty-sixth session

9 November 2020

Excellencies,

We wish to inform Members of the International Seabed Authority and observers to the Authority that we have been following closely the evolution of the pandemic situation and the associated travel restrictions across the globe.

In light of that, the purpose of this joint letter is to convey the outcome of our mutual exchange of views on this subject. In addition, we further considered the information available in the host country of the Authority and conducted consultations with the Secretary-General of the Authority. The Bureau of the Council was also consulted.

We recall that, owing to the developments concerning the pandemic situation, the second part of the twenty-sixth session of the Council and the twenty-sixth session of the Assembly which were scheduled in July had to be tentatively rescheduled to 7-16 October and further postponed tentatively to December 2020. As you are aware, the twenty-sixth session has resumed for the Council since 21 September 2020 and has been open for the Assembly since 5 October 2020.

In view of the unfolding of events concerning the pandemic situation, including the related existing travel restrictions in many countries, and after carefully considering all available options, we have come to the regrettable conclusion that, due to such continued limitations, there are no conditions to hold in-person meetings for the Assembly and for the Council in December 2020.

Consequently, as a way forward, there is no other possibility than to proceed with the time-sensitive and priority matters as identified in the programmes of work of both the Council and of the Assembly.

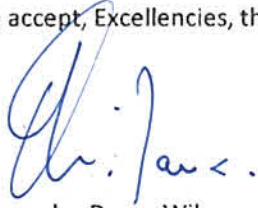
In light of the above, the President of the Council, after having consulted the Bureau, will circulate a letter tomorrow, 10 November 2020, for consideration of the Council members on a schedule and modalities for the implementation of the Decision of the Council of the International Seabed Authority of 23 October 2020 concerning the organization of work for the second part of the twenty-sixth session of the Council in order to consider three time-sensitive issues which the Council must consider before the end of this year, bearing in mind that the decisions of the Council regarding two of those issues (the candidate list for the election of the Secretary-General and the budget of the International Seabed Authority for the financial period 2021-2022) are necessary for the Assembly to take its own decisions subsequently.

The President of the of the Assembly will circulate a letter tomorrow (10 November 2020) as well regarding the election of the Vice-Presidents and the appointment of the Credentials Committee.

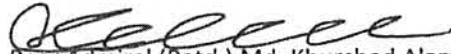
In concluding we wish to reiterate that we arrived at this conclusion after having thoroughly considered all possibilities. It should be reminded that decision-making under the pandemic situation is of an exceptional nature and does not in any way constitute an amendment to the the rules of procedure of

the Assembly and to the rules of procedure of the Council. This is only an exceptional mechanism to proceed with the adoption of decisions which require to be addressed before the end of the year.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of our highest consideration.



Ambassador Denys Wibaux
President of the Assembly of the International
Seabed Authority



Rear Admiral (Retd.) Md. Khurshed Alam
President of the Council of the International
Seabed Authority