

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

H.E. MR. ALHAJI FANDAY TURAY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY
In-person Meeting, 26th Session
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(Item 9: Annual report of the Secretary-General)

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336 East 45th Street, New York NY 10017
Tel: (212) 688 1656 - FAX (212) 688 4924 email: sierraleone@un.int

President of the Assembly,
Secretary-General,
Distinguished Representatives,

1. Sierra Leone is pleased to participate in this first in-person meeting of the Assembly, following the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic. At the outset, let me use this opportunity to thank the Host Country, Jamaica, for its leadership in allowing business continuity in the work of the International Seabed Authority, doing so at a time when new COVID-19 related restrictions are being imposed globally.

2. In similar light, my delegation thanks the Secretariat for the effective preparation for the hybrid format for both Council and Assembly meetings. Sierra Leone appreciates that as Member States, we were constructive in reaching consensus on how to proceed with the work of Council and the Assembly, without creating barriers to inclusivity and transparency, as well as in adhering to public health and safety guidelines.

3. Sierra Leone aligns this statement with the statement delivered by the Distinguished Representative of Ghana on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. President,

4. Sierra Leone congratulates you on your election and commends you for your leadership this session.

5. Since this is the first in-person Assembly meeting after his re-election for a second term, we similarly congratulate the

Secretary-General, **H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge**, and commend his best efforts in leading the work of the Secretariat, particularly in this challenging period.

6. Sierra Leone as a costal African State affirms its principled position on the need for the effective protection of the marine environment, particularly from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed minerals related activities, in the international seabed area, for the benefit of humankind as a whole, under the principle of the Common Heritage of Mankind.

7. In acknowledging the Authority's mandate in this regard, we thank the Secretary-General for his annual report **ISBA/26/A/2**, its addendum **ISBA/26/A/2/Add.1,** and for introducing the report under the agenda item. Sierra Leone takes note of the report, and the work done in the 25th session of the Authority, and the first part of the 26th session of the Council, in which inter alia, it decided to establish three informal working groups responsible for: (a) issues related to the preservation and protection of the marine environment; (b) inspection, compliance and enforcement; and (c) institutional matters, to advance discussions on the draft regulations for exploitation of mineral resources in the Area.

8. Further, my delegation uses this opportunity to fully endorse the recognition of the need for a standardized approach to regional environmental management plans, as well as a template with minimum requirements for such plans. We therefore note the developments regarding the Council's request to the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) to further develop the "Guidance to facilitate the

development of regional environmental management plans", and the activities under the "Strategic Direction 3: Protect the marine environment" in the "Report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Authority for the period 2019-2023".

9. On the composition and size of the LTC, my delegation notes that Council adopted a decision in the 25th session, charting a path to enable a final decision to be taken at the second part of its 26th session. As we thank the facilitator, **Mr. Vladislav Kurbatskiy** of the Russian Federation, for all his work, we note that this issue will be addressed under agenda item 8, "Statement by the President of the Council on the work of the Council".

Mr. President,

10. In recalling that the Assembly adopted a decision relating to the action plan of the Authority in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the delegation of Sierra Leone further takes note of the "Report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Authority for the period 2019-2023".

11. We reiterate the position of the African Group on the "Strategic Direction 6" aimed at ensuring full integration and participation of developing States, in particular through the operationalization of the Enterprise. The operationalization of the Enterprise is most fundamental in giving full meaning to the principle of the Common Heritage of Mankind. This Assembly is in a position to give strategic and policy direction to Council, underscoring the importance for Council to adopt the recommendation of

the LTC for the appointment of an interim Director-General.

12. Finally, Sierra Leone welcomes the continuing participation of the Authority in the intergovernmental conference on 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 (BBNJ). The Authority should continue to draw attention to the need to take the measures necessary to ensure effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from activities in the Area, and the need for complementarity and coherence between the applicable instruments.

13. In closing, **Mr. President**, Sierra Leone re-echoes its appreciation of the Assembly's decision to name the museum of the Authority in honour of **Mr. Nii Allotey Odunton** and commends the Assembly for the appropriate ttribute to the memory of the late **Satya N. Nandan,** both in honour of their services as Secretary-General of the Authority.

14. Sierra Leone deeply appreciates the efforts of the Assembly to memorialize important aspects in the work and mandate of the Authority.

15. **I thank you**.